F VOL 3

LETTERS

FROM

ELIZABETH SOPHIA DE VALIERE

TO HER FRIEND

LOUISA HORTENSIA DE CANTELEU.

VOL. I.

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LOUISA HORTENSIA DE CANTELEU.

BY

MADAM RICCOBONI.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH by

MR. MACEUEN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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LETTERS

FROM

ELIZABETH SOPHIA DE VALIERE

To her Friend

LOUISA HORTENSIA DE CANTELEU.

LETTER I.

MY ſilence *alarms*; *afflicts* you! It cannot be otherwiſe. During theſe laſt ten days, I have continually attempted to write to you, but the oppreſſion of my heart, the abundance of my tears——O my dear Hortenſia, your friend is no longer in the ſituation in which you left her; no longer the niece of a woman univerſally reſpected, the declared heireſs to an ample fortune: protected by none, without relations, without ſupport, ſhe is nothing, poſſeſſes nothing, hopes for nothing.

Have you been informed of the death of Madam d'Auterive? Do you know that I have loſt my only protectreſs? That I have now no aſylum,

no certain place of retreat? Unknown every where, a ſtranger, poor and forſaken by all; I have already experienced the extreme humiliation inſeparable from miſery; and I have ſeen my own expoſed to the eyes of the whole world.

My dear, my ſincere friend, why are we ſo cruelly ſeparated? What muſt become of me? Whither ſhall I betake myſelf? Who will condeſcend to direct my ſteps, and aſſiſt me to ſettle my wavering mind? Left to myſelf, obliged to provide for my own ſubſiſtence, I am at a loſs what method to purſue to procure me the neceſſaries of life: my youth and inexperience alarm me; I feel myſelf ſeized with unuſual terror, which makes me dread a world where I muſt wander without council or direction. Alone intereſted in the preſervation of a being unconnected with every other, I tremble at the danger—I cannot think,—reflect. In vain I ſtrive—I have no power but to weep.

Six in the Morning.

I have juſt read your letter over again. I ſee you are ignorant of my loſs and misfortune. You ſpeak to me of *my Aunt*, good God! Had I ever one? Madam d'Auterive, who reared my infancy with ſuch a tender care, with ſo much gentleneſs, and goodneſs! Madam d'Auterive—Oh! my heart is ready to break—is no more.

On

On Monday, the fifteenth of this month, ſhe was torn from me, nor did any diſorder, complaint or accident, warn us of our approaching misfortune. She enjoyed perfect health; was gay, good humoured and happy: all about her partook of her happineſs. God all powerful—forgive me—I weep, I murmur not.

O my dear companion! You whom I have loved from my earlieſt years; you whoſe abſence made me feel the firſt pangs of grief, continue to love me. In all this wide world your friendſhip is the only treaſure left to the ſad, to the uufortunate Sophia.

In the ſuperſcription of your letters, inſtead of Saint-Aulay, write la Valiere; and direct them to be left at Madam d'Auterive's. Pauline will take care to deliver them to me.

LETTER II.

YOU tell me, deareſt Hortenſia, that the tendereſt ſentiments may be mingled with bitterneſs: though it is the ſweeteſt comfort to unburden our grief into the boſom of a friend, it is ſad we cannot do it without afflicting that friend. For heaven's ſake do not give way to ſo much ſorrow, for not being *able to aſſiſt me* or *to afford me a ſafe retreat*—Ceaſe then to alarm your own imagination, and pity

the danger to which my forlorn condition, and my poverty expoſe me; weep no longer for me. I but juſt now broke out into ſhrieks and moans at your kind expreſſions, which add to my ſorrows—they have awakened my fears and my apprehenſions.

You aſk me to explain the words, *a ſtranger* and *unknown*? That I can but too eaſily do. I am not the daughter of that niece of Madam d'Auterive who died in Holland. The Marchioneſs de Germeuil, ſiſter to that lady, is not my aunt; I have enjoyed full ſeventeen years, the rank and name of Mademoiſelle de Saint-Aulay, who came into the world three days before me, and died the fourth day after I was born. A paper written by the hand of Madam d'Auterive, and read in the preſence of the relations, of a magiſtrate and his officers, has laid open this ſurpriſing ſecret, ſo long and ſo religiouſly kept, and of which no one ever entertained the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion. Mr. Smith, her correſpondent at Amſterdam, and Pauline, her oldeſt chamber-maid, were alone in the ſecret. This girl attended her into Holland; where ſhe was witneſs to the adventure which excited the compaſſion of her miſtreſs.

I here ſubjoin a copy of that paper. It will inform you, my dear, of the ſingular and unfortunate ſtory of your friend.

Copy

Copy of a Paper found after the death of Madam d'Auterive, in one of the corner Japan Cabinets in the Saloon.

EIghteen months after the death of M. d'Auterive, in the year 17**, finding myſelf poſſeſſed of a conſiderable fortune, I left off commerce and banking, cloſed my accounts, and about the middle of April determined on a journey to Holland, to viſit ſeveral of my correſpondents, liquidate part of my capital, and take proper meaſures for the recovery of the remainder.

Theſe apparent reaſons ſerved to conceal from the eyes of my family a tender motive of compaſſion, which they might have blamed, without being able in the leaſt to weaken it; by this means, I avoided many unneceſſary debates. Madam de Saint-Aulay, my niece, then lived at Amſterdam. I had always loved her: her ſubmiſſive letters, her ſolicitations, her misfortune, prevailed with me not to imitate the ſeverity of my brother, juſtly irritated at her marrying a Proteſtant, at her flight into Holland, and at the report that ſhe was going to embrace the religion of her husband.

Diſinherited, forſaken by all her relations, to compleat her misfortune, ſhe loſt that huſband,

band, whoſe tenderneſs and affection made amends for all ſhe had ſacrificed to love. M. de Saint-Aulay died the ſecond year after their marriage, leaving my niece on the eve of becoming a mother, overwhelmed with grief and in a very deplorable ſituation.

Determined to forgive her a wrong ſtep, which I believed had been too ſeverely puniſhed, I conſented to bring her home to my houſe, and to take care of her; I previouſly informed her of my ſetting out from Paris, of the time when I ſhould be with her, with the determination of my affairs in the ſeveral cities to which they had carried me; I went, as I had promiſed, to Amſterdam. Alighting at my niece's, I learned, to my great ſurprize and affliction, that ſhe had that moment expired in labour, being delivered of a girl, weakly, delicate, tormented with violent convulſions, ſo that ſhe ſeemed every moment as if ſhe would have followed her unhappy mother.

Not caring to paſs the night in a houſe filled with mourning and ſadneſs, I ſent to M. Smith my old friend and correſpondent. He was in the country, whence he was expected home the next day. Being unacquainted both with his daughters and their husbands, I reſolved on going to the principal inn; whither I carried the child and its nurſe. I asked whether they

could

could get me ſomething for ſupper: it was now ſix in the evening, and I had eat nothing the whole day. I made my chamber-maid and the wet-nurſe ſit down at table; I looked on, overwhelmed with ſad reflections, when all on a ſudden repeated and piercing ſhrieks made me ſtart from my ſeat: I thought the houſe was on fire; I haſtily quitted the room, and running to the end of a pretty long gallery, where a number of people aſſembled attracted me; I ſaw a man about twenty, ſtretched on the ground, pale and bloody, his eyes cloſed, breathleſs, and the blood no longer ſtreaming from his wound. A beautiful charming young woman on her knees held up his head, bathed his face with her tears, ſtrove to bring him to life, and loſing all hopes of his recovery, abandoned herſelf to ſhrieks and moans, and to every expreſſion of a grief ſo violent, that overpowered by its exceſs, this inchanting creature fell motionleſs on the already cold boſom of him whoſe loſs occaſioned her ſorrows. She was carried to bed: I followed her: I did what I could to aſſiſt her: I immediately diſpatched a perſon in queſt of one whoſe art might give her eaſe. They brought a ſurgeon; the people of the houſe aſſured me he was a very expert one: after conſidering attentively the young lady who had ſwooned away, he ſeemed

in doubt whether ſhe yet breathed: he opened a vein; ſhe came to herſelf a little, ſeveral times cried out in Engliſh, Heavens, O Heavens! and relapſed into her former condition. They recovered her a ſecond time; ſhe then caſt a mournful look on all about her, and fixing her eyes on me, joining her trembling hands, and lifting them up towards heaven, threw herſelf into my arms, crying out, *he is dead, he is dead!* and cloſed her eyes for ever.

Her cruel end did not put a period to theſe tragic events: a child, in appearance condemned never to behold the light, was on the point of periſhing in the womb of its unhappy mother. The ſurgeon undertook to ſave it by an operation, the ſight of which I found myſelf unable to endure. To ſtrengthen his zeal, I promiſed him an handſome gratification, and quitted the room that he might be at liberty to proceed to do his office.

I with difficulty got through the crowd that filled this ſorrowful place; the whole family, with many more from the neighbourhood, were aſſembled on the occaſion. The object the ſurgeon had in view, the operation he was going to perform, drew about him, the landlady, her women ſervants, in ſhort all that could get near him. As I was returning to my chamber, I perceived a man on the middle

of

of the ſtairs; he asked me in French, whether the lady that had fainted away had come to herſelf, and how ſhe was? Alas, ſaid I to him, ſhe is dead; ſhe this moment expired in my arms. The man cried out aloud, repeating it ſeveral times, *my maſter*, *my poor maſter*; he went down again precipitately, and inſtantly diſappeared.

I called, I would have had him purſued, and arreſted; no body made me any anſwer. I had no man ſervant, having left my own ſick at the houſe of one of my correſpondents. Could the man have been ſeized, he would have doubtleſs afforded ſome light into an adventure, which it is poſſible may always remain an impenetrable ſecret.

As the promiſe I made him convinced the ſurgeon that I muſt needs intereſt myſelf in the ſucceſs of his operation, he made haſte to bring me the infant he had juſt extracted from the body of its unhappy mother. From the obſervations he made, he concluded it muſt have come into the world two months before its time. It was a girl. Never did object pierce my heart with ſo ſtrong and ſo tender ſentiments of compaſſion: its feeble cries brought tears into my eyes: I took her, and lifting her up towards heaven, I fervently prayed that the Almighty would preſerve and bleſs this inno-

cent creature, ſaved from an untimely death, bereft of its natural protectors, abandoned even before it was born, to the fatherly care of his ever watchful Providence.

Whilſt I cauſed the child to be wrapped in ſome of the ſwaddling clothes of little Saint-Aulay, an extreme confuſion reigned throughout the houſe. The officers of juſtice were arrived, and the doors were all ſhut. They examined all thoſe who had been witneſſes to the death of theſe two perſons. They collected but few facts: theſe communicated no light with regard to the names or condition of thoſe unhappy ſtrangers. By their dreſs, and their language, they appeared to be Engliſh. The murderer too, ſeemed of the ſame nation. The Frenchman who had ſpoken to me, probably belonged to one deeply intereſted in the life of her, concerning whoſe health he had been ſent to inquire. The whole of their depoſitions were reduced to the following narrative, extracted and tranſlated by myſelf from an information extremely long and diffuſe.

Extract from the examination taken before the Dutch Magiſtrates.

MONDAY, 6th June 17**, in the dusk of the evening the ſtranger, whoſe name and country are to us unknown, arrived, accompanied by a ſailor, who carried nothing

beſides a large *ſac de nuit* * The ſtranger paid the porter very generouſly, and diſmiſſed him when he entered the houſe.

He went over all the apartments, pitched upon two, agreed for the price and gave earneſt: he ſpoke pretty good Dutch, ſeemed very uneaſy and impatient, was for ever going to the Port, beſpoke the beſt proviſions the houſe afforded, hardly eat any thing, went to bed late, and roſe at day break.

Sunday the 12th the lady who juſt now expired arrived about eleven in the morning, carrying in her hand a very ſmall bundle tied up in a cambric handkerchief; ſhe enquired for the ſtranger, deſcribed him by his ſtature, the colour of his hair and clothes, but never named him. She expreſſed herſelf with much difficulty in Dutch; as they were anſwering her queſtions, the perſon ſhe ſought after returned; he perceived her, cried out for joy, flew to her, preſſes her to his boſom, repeating, my wife, my friend, my beloved companion, what have I ſuffered during your abſence! and accoſting the miſtreſs of the inn, ſaid, this is my wife, whom I ſo impatiently waited for, now ſhe is come, I am completely bleſt.

The young lady was conducted to the apartment appointed for her: ſeeing her fatigued, her

* A bag to hold a few things more immediately neceſſary on a journey, as ſhirts &c.

her husband begged her to take ſome reſt: ſhe conſented: he went out, the landlady undreſſed her, and put her to bed. Two hours afterwards ſhe brought her tea, which ſhe made for her: whilſt ſhe was drinking it, her husband returned: he ſeemed charmed to ſee her; he beheld her with looks of ſilent contemplation; the landlady fearing to be troubleſome, quitted the room.

The young lady roſe late: her husband and ſhe dined at five. She eat nothing; ſighed, wept and ſeemed overwhelmed with grief. The maids who waited at table, heard her husband ſpeak to her in a paſſionate tone of voice, afterwards in a tender, endearing, and even ſubmiſſive accent, and preſently after he would fall into a paſſion again. They did not underſtand their diſcourſe, but conjectured he was diſpleaſed at her ſighs and tears. The aſtoniſhing beauty of this lady, her ſweetneſs of temper, her modeſty, the noble air diffuſed over her whole perſon, and her deep melancholy, intereſted and moved every one in her favour: they were never weary with gazing at her; ſhe engaged their whole attention; they ſtrove who ſhould enjoy the pleaſing pre-eminence of approaching and waiting on her.

This day, Wedneſday the fifteenth, between five and ſix in the evening, her husband came down: he was ready to go out; ſeeing the

landlady

landlady in the court-yard, where ſhe was at work with two of her daughters; he told her ſhe might diſpoſe of his apartment towards the middle of the following week; that his lady's maid and his baggage were ſoon to arrive; that he was to embark on the Monday or Tueſday at fartheſt: he added, that he ſhould go to the poſt-office in hopes of finding a letter of conſequence; but that ſhould he not receive it, no alteration would be made in his meaſures. He was ſtill ſpeaking, when a man in an Engliſh dreſs, about ſix and twenty, and of a noble appearance, preſented himſelf at the gate. On perceiving him, the young lady's husband ſeemed ſurprized and vexed: heturned pale; made up to him and ſeemed as if he would oppoſe his entrance; both ſpoke a language unknown to thoſe who heard them. Their diſcourſe was exceeding ſhort: they went out together; and were ſeen to turn down towards the *Canal du Prince**.

Probably the lady who diſcovered ſo much anxiety had obſerved them from her window: the inſtant they diſappeared, ſhe ſhrieked aloud: the landlady went to her chamber, found her on her knees, pale, trembling, her hands lifted up; ſhe wept, groan'd, implored every power above: agitated, diſtracted, beſide herſelf,

* The name of a ſtreet.

herſelf; ſhe roſe up, attempted to walk, to go down ſtairs, and to run after the two perſons, for both of whom ſhe ſeemed equally to intereſt herſelf; ſhe fell without ſtrength or motion. The landlady made her ſmell to ſalts; ſcarce had ſhe recovered her ſpirits, when a young man, a ſervant of the inn, aſſiſted by ſeveral men belonging to the place, brought back her huſband, who had been run through the body with a ſword, which probably had entered his heart, for he was already without heat or reſpiration.

This ſervant, who had been ſent on an errand into a ſtreet at the end of the *Canal du Prince*, returning thence, perceived the gentleman with his ſword drawn, and ſaw him drop: his antagoniſt far from flying, expreſſed evident ſighs of extreme ſorrow, and leaning over him, ſtrove to aſſiſt him; two men came up to him, and laying hold of him, forcibly carried him off, and put him on board a boat, which ſhot out of ſight like an arrow. On approaching the wounded man, the waiter knew him; and thinking he was only in a ſwoon, immediately called for aſſiſtance, and had him carried to his inn.

This was all they were able to learn. This was the ſum of what fourteen witneſſes depoſed. There was not a paper found about the two unfortunate perſons capable of affording

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ing the leaſt information. A ſmall quantity of exceeding fine linen, their dreſs neat but ſimple, as the dreſs of travellers uſually is, two gold watches of tolerably rich workmanſhip, ſixty guineas, forty louis d'ors with ſome few other pieces of French coin, remained in the hands of the officers of the Republic; the husband and wife were buried at my expence; I undertook to bring up and, when required, to produce the child born under ſuch fatal auſpices: I depoſited the value, and gave my receipt for a miniature-picture mounted in gold, and ſet round with diamonds: I myſelf had taken it from the finger of the dying lady during her firſt ſwoon, with a gold ring, which to me ſeemed a wedding ring. I had forgot both till after the inventory of their effects had been made. I was permitted to retain theſe valuable tokens for the poor orphan: I held her over the font with M. Smith, who came that very evening from the country: I named her Elizabeth Sophia de Valiere, from a manor which belonged to me. The honeſt ſurgeon witneſſed the ceremony, and ſeemed well ſatisfied with my liberality.

The death of Madam de Saint-Aulay, and this cruel event, occaſioned me ſo much grief, that being melancholy and ill, I was unable to purſue my journey for ſome days. I accepted of an

apartmen

apartment at the houſe of M. Smith, and left Pauline, the nurſe and the two children at the inn. On the fourth night after the birth of Sophia, a violent convulſion carried off my grand-niece. Her death inſpired me with the deſign of bringing up under her name the orphan, whom in my heart I had adopted as my daughter. I ordered Pauline to keep theſe events a profound ſecret: I made her the confidant of my deſign, and of the reaſons which engaged me to conceal the ſecret of this child, and cover the uncertainty of her ſituation as well as the condition of her parents.

It is ſo extremely mortifying to be ignorant of one's original; to live in a ſociety with which we have no manner of connection; to be an object of pity; to be obliged to hear on every occaſion the ſtory of one's misfortunes; to live expoſed to falſe conjectures and malevolent obſervations; to become the ſubject of curioſity, of a fruitleſs compaſſion, and often of an unmerited contempt: a child whoſe extraction is unknown, is ever a melancholy child: the leaſt word offends, and humbles him; in the midſt of plenty, he is an object of commiſeration: the world is cruel enough to let him perceive that he wants that protection which he would have no occaſion for, if he were not inſulted by ſeeing men glorying in the moſt common

advan-

advantages. The title of my grand-niece enſured Sophia from mortifications of this nature, and by giving it her, I injured no body. M. de Saint-Aulay, being diſinherited like his wife, and for the very ſame reaſon, left his daughter no pretenſions to a fortune.

A ſum of money depoſited in the hands of Monſieur Smith, induced the nurſe to accompany me to Paris, whence I ſent her back the day after my arrival, according to agreement. The little innocent creature, whoſe fortune and preſervation heaven has been pleaſed to intruſt to my guardianſhip, nurſed at my houſe by the ſiſter of Pauline, continues to enjoy perfect health, begins to ſmile upon me, improves in beauty, and becomes every day more dear to me.

I have written theſe particulars, that I may have ever before me, the engagements I have entered into; that I may ever remember that this child is a ſacred truſt, for which I am anſwerable to God and her family, ſhould chance or the enquiries of M. Smith one day diſcover the family of her parents.

The miniature remaining in my poſſeſſion is found to be the picture of the unhappy young man, whoſe death was ſo fatal to the mother of Sophia.

I certify

I certify the truth of the facts mentioned in this paper and ſign it as an act which may prove of ſervice to my little ward. Dated at Paris, this firſt day of Auguſt 17**.

Signed by me, Elizabeth Sophia de Mauni, widow of Louis Philip d'Auterive.

Sequel of the Letter preceeding the copy of the manuſcript.

WHAT an account, my dear Hortenſia! How dreadful my deſtiny! A creature, the moſt *unfortunate* of her ſex, was ſhe who bore me. O God! and torn from the *dead body* of my mother, born amidſt the ſhrieks of deſpair, or rather amidſt the dreadful ſtillneſs of death! An ominous beginning of a life ſo preſerved.——Why could I not follow this wretched mother to the grave? How her fate moves and terrifies me. O! The fatal officious hand of that man, how dared he? But far, far from me be it to murmur or complain: reſigned to the decrees of a wiſe all foreſeeing providence, I will ſtrive to bear up under the load of this heavy trial, I will place all my hopes in him, and by my reſignation, and ſubmiſſion, I ſhall perhaps be endued with the courage neceſſary to ſupport thoſe afflictions, whoſe

whoſe very idea overwhelms me at this inſtant. Adieu my dear, tender, and only friend.

LETTER, III.

MY dearly beloved companion, calm your fears, diſpel your apprehenſions, give not yourſelf over to theſe tormenting thoughts. I reproach myſelf with troubling the peace of your mind, with raiſing a deſire to do good in a ſoul ſo generous as yours, which muſt feel the moſt cruel diſappointment at its want of power.

The death of your father, the diſordered ſtate of his affairs, the uncertainty of your fortune dependent on a tedious litigation, give me to underſtand but too well, the ſad ſenſations, ſo clearly marked in the bitterneſs of your expreſſions. How have I wiſhed, with what paſſion have I wiſhed, to fix you at Paris, to keep you near myſelf, to ſpare you the mortification of following that rich, that covetous couſin of yours to Roan.—O my dear, what a difference between that hard-hearted guardian and Madam d'Auterive! what goodneſs, what delicacy in her beneficence! to conceal a wretched orphan under the character of a relation, to ſcreen her from the mortification of an inſulting pity,—inſulting indeed.

You

You *cannot conceive* how Madam d'Auterive, ſhould have neglected *to ſecure my fortune by a will?* You accuſe her of an *unpardonable neglect.* The extract from ſome of her letters to M. Smith, will oblige you to do her more juſtice. In theſe you will find her entire affection, her tears, her anxiety, her tender partiality for her ward: you will diſcover her intention, her reſolution, alas! too favourable perhaps. Then will you deplore with me my mother, my friend, my benefactreſs.

I ſhould deem myſelf ungrateful, did the condition to which her loſs has reduced me, obliterate but for a moment the memory of her kindneſs. The education ſhe has given me, the principles for which I am indebted to her, oblige me to an everlaſting gratitude: to me her memory ſhall be ever ſacred, ever dear! I will ſtrive to do her honour by my conduct: the wiſe inſtructions of Madam d'Auterive, her noble precepts ſhall remain for ever engraven on my heart. In my humiliation, in the moſt extreme indigence, I ſhall never deviate from them: my punctual obſervation of them will be the ſole conſolation, the only reſource which the diſmal proſpect now open before me will allow me to hope for.

I this moment received from the hands of Pauline herſelf, the extract ſhe has made from the

the letters of her miſtreſs. It is very long, and you will doubtleſs find it filled with uſeleſs circumſtances; but I have no time to tranſcribe it. Chance affords an opportunity of ſending you this packet in a very expeditious manner, as it is too bulky to go by the poſt; I take the ſame method to incloſe the miniature picture, preſerved by Madam d'Auterive. Madam du Marſai gave it Pauline to deliver it to me. How I was moved at the ſight of it! It ſeemed; perhaps I deceive myſelf—Examine it, my dear, tell me whether the features of that unfortunate young man, do not put you in mind of my own. Alas! That picture affects, intereſts me, I cannot look on it without ſhedding tears.

The perſon who is ſo good as to take charge of the packet, will ſtay ſome days at Roan; at whoſe return, you will take care to deliver it into the ſame hands.

ARTICLE

Articles relating to Mademoiſelle de Valiere, extracted from the letters of Madam d'Auterive, to Mr. Richard Smith, during a correſpondence of ſeventeen years.

ARTICLE I.

I thank you, my friend, for the farther enquiries you have been ſo good as to make in England. Your correſpondents in the three kingdoms, you tell me, have not heard of any woman who *diſappeared about that time*, nor of any man who *has abſented himſelf from his friends*. This is ſurpriſing: theſe two unfortunate perſons, were certainly above the common level. Your god-daughter is well; I love her tenderly. You are in the right. *This is our child*; but what need of a *new tye* between us to keep alive theſe ſentiments, which nor time nor diſtance can weaken.

ARTICLE II.

ALL *your enquiries have been to no purpoſe.* So much the better, my friend. I wiſh with all my ſoul Sophia may remain in my poſſeſſion. I feel an exceſſive pleaſure in ſeeing this innocent young creature growing up under

under my eye. She is gentle, gay, pretty, and endearing. I ſhall often let you hear how ſhe does.

ARTICLE III.

WHAT! is it to maintain the title of my correſpondent, is it in order to *oblige me to write to you*, that you *perſiſt in performing the office of my Banker, and turning my money to the beſt account?* Do you then think me capable of forgetting you? Be well aſſured that were this commerce of intereſt to be at an end, I ſhould ſtill remember my friend; Have I then nothing to communicate to the godfather of Sophia? Yes, certainly. For I ſhall ſoon be able to tire you with the repetition of her good qualities. I will inſpire you with ſentiments of affection, and even of tenderneſs for *our child.*

ARTICLE IV.

I have received the two boxes; the commiſſion has been well executed, and I thank you for it. Part of theſe rich toys, is a preſent intended for the Counteſs de Germeuil, my very haughty niece. And yet we are by

no means well together. The ſight of Sophia is offenſive to her; the ſiſter of Madam de Saint-Aulay, ſees with concern an heireſs in the ſame degree with her ſon. Madam de Bayeux and Monſieur du Marſai, farther removed, but full as greedy, always ſpeak of her as a favourite, capable of prejudicing them in their pretenſions to my fortune. She will be very *ſufficiently indemnified*, ſay they, *for her mother's being diſinherited*. It is hardly credible. This family is very rich, who are ſo very ſolicitous about my diſpoſing of my fortune. I am ſtill young, and my relations are working out a tedious ſcene of uncertainty for themſelves.

ARTICLE V.

I cannot conclude my letter without chiding you for your expreſſion when you ſpeak of Sophia. *The object of your charity?* For ſhame, my good friend! Would I have brought her up as a relation, had I intended to humble her to ſuch a degree? She is no ſuch thing as *the object of my charity*: ſhe is the object of my care, of my affection, of my moſt tender love. Sweet little creature! ſhe is juſt come into my cloſet; if you could but ſee with what a grace

ſhe

ſhe moves towards me, you would never forgive yourſelf, that harſh expreſſion.

ARTICLE VI.

YOU have frightened me indeed. This Engliſhman is in queſt of his wife, *carried off*, *young*, *beautiful*, *with child*. My heart beats within me. By good luck the dates do not agree. And beſides, the mother of Sophia could certainly never be the wife of *a kind of ſeafaring man*. I never beheld a nobler, a more ſtriking figure! Her daughter promiſes to have the ſame air of dignity. Her reaſon begins to dawn; ſhe learns with great eaſe. I ſhall lay out all my care in improving theſe happy diſpoſitions. She becomes every day the object of envy; they flatter and careſs, but do not love her. Be faithful to our ſecret, my good friend: the happineſs of this child, and the comfort of my life depend on it. Good God! if the ſtory of the poor little girl were once known, what mortifications would ſhe endure from ſelfiſhneſs and pride.

ARTICLE VII.

YOU ask me whether Pauline be diſcreet. I can take upon me to anſwer for that good and honeſt creature. I have juſt ſettled an annuity on her of five hundred livres * a year. She is now the gouvernante of Sophia, and ſo attached to the child, that ſhe ſeems to think this place a reward ſufficient for all her ſervices. I have always remarked it, my friend, a diſintereſted perſon is generally a truſty perſon. I have been juſt ſettling the *houſhold* of my pretty ward. I have appointed her a chamber-maid of nine years old; ſhe is niece to Pauline; and a footman who can ſcarce walk alone; he was a poor little ſlave, whom I bought to give him his liberty. The negro is a whining ſloven——the chamber-maid a giddy headed ſtubborn girl; but the miſtreſs is ſo good humoured, and ſo indulgent, that ſhe preſerves peace in her little family, at which, to ſay the truth, I am not very much pleaſed, for I am amuſed with their childiſh diſputes.

A R-

* About 22 l.

ARTICLE VIII.

I Could almoſt ſcold you; what! not ſearch into the bottom of the affair.—This noble and rich inhabitant of the Engliſh colonies, why may not he be the father of Sophia. *What became of him nobody can tell—He diſappeared all on a ſudden!*—The time when he was ſeen in London, and when the Dutch captain bound for Curaçoa was to take him on board—how came you not to be ſtruck with theſe concurrent circumſtances? Your ſeaman has juſt ſet ſail again; *he propoſes to make a long voyage*, perhaps may be ſhipwrecked, we ſhall then be left in the dark.

Notwithſtanding the ſatisfaction I find in viewing Sophia as my preſent delight, and in conſidering her as the future comfort of my old age, I ſhould think I wronged her, if I neglected the ſmalleſt traces that can lead to the diſcovery of her family. Write, my friend, write to every port, where this man is likely to put in. I have ſchemes, though for the preſent at a diſtance, but they are ſuch as make me very deſirous of knowing the whole ſtory of Sophia.

ARTICLE IX.

I Have not been *negligent*, but I have been vexed, afflicted, tormented. I have been on the point of loſing my dear Sophia by the ſmall pox, of the moſt dangerous kind. O, if heaven had bereft me of this precious gift of its goodneſs! I have no experience of a mother's feelings, but I doubt whether they can be more tender, or more exquiſite than mine. Your god-daughter is above any idea you can poſſibly form of her. To a thouſand attractive graces, ſhe adds a moſt excellent heart. She is inconſolable, when ſhe thinks ſhe has diſobliged the meaneſt perſon; ſhe is bleſt with wit, an equal temper, underſtanding, and application—You ſee how I run on in her commendation, don't I? And ſo I ſhall more and more; you alone are in the ſecret, I have ſchemes as I ſaid before; I ſhall want advice; your prudence and friendſhip muſt direct me.

ARTICLE X.

YOUR queſtions ſhew how much you intereſt yourſelf in what concerns my Sophy: I am obliged to you for it; yes, ſhe has natural

tural talents: her voice is ſonorous, flexible and ſoft; ſhe has a brilliant finger on the guittar and harpſicord; ſhe dances with amazing grace; ſhe loves reading, and has an exact and judicious taſte. One quality ſhe poſſeſſes, preferable to all theſe advantages, is her extreme good-nature, and that ſenſibility to friendſhip, with which her heart is filled. Hortenſia de Canteleu takes her leſſons with her: as this young lady has no mother, and lives but next door, her father lets her be with me the whole day. Theſe two little ones ſtrive to pleaſe, to oblige, and mutually inſtruct, and have the moſt tender, endearing regard for each other: Hortenſia is delighted to hear the praiſes of Mademoiſelle de Saint-Aulay; Sophia, on the other hand, is always diſpleaſed when ſhe thinks Mademoiſelle de Canteleu is not commended enough.

Alas! my friend, this creature, as charming as ſhe is, in the eye of a world filled with idle and abſurd prejudices, is a mere *nothing*. What mother would make choice of her for her ſon? She is without relations; ſhe is unknown—My heart is hurt with this diſpenſation of providence; but who can unravel its counſels?

ARTICLE XI.

YOU *do not conceive my uneaſineſs? You do not imagine what can poſſibly torment me?* Good God, my friend, the happieſt ſituation in appearance has a gloomy ſide; it eſcapes the eyes of others, but fixes our own. It is true, I am *rich* and *independent*. I am not the ſlave of ſilly caprice, or fooliſh paſſions; but I have great ſenſibility, am tender-hearted, the ſmalleſt deviations from virtue hurt me, but ingrati tude ſhocks me.

I have ſerved all my relations as you know, and yet none of them have any regard for me. I find myſelf at forty-ſix, ſurrounded by covetous nephews, who are for ever calculating my income, and numbering my days; one would imagine, they were the proprietors of my eſtate, and that they grudged me the life-rent, and would fain ſhorten my period in it, in order to get the ſooner into the poſſeſſion of it themſelves.

I am aſhamed to tire you with an account of my domeſtic troubles, by entering into the particulars of theſe family bickerings, which I hate to talk of. After all, as you ſay my fortune

fortune is independent, therefore nothing but juſtice and equity can influence me as to my diſpoſal of it in any ſettlement upon Sophia.

I brought M. d'Auterive ſix hundred thouſand livres*; you are not ignorant how much this ſum accumulated in his hands in a few years. I imagine I ought to make it revert to my family, even adding to it the amount of what ſums I inherited, jointly with Madam de Germeuil, Monſieur du Marſai and Madam de Bayeux: but my huſband's preſents; the produce of the partnerſhip; my ſavings; all theſe are ſo many acquiſitions; I may diſpoſe of them, and I deſign them for Sophia.

ARTICLE XII.

YOUR propoſal is mad enough; *let us marry, and adopt Sophia.* Were it not for the prejudice it might do to my character, by taking a maſter and living in Holland, I might poſſibly reliſh the project. What is it poſſible after ſixteen years, that you can ſtill retain any inclination to marry me? *Lovely, charming!* mighty fine? Indeed, indeed, my good friend, *this fineſt face in the world* is become a face juſt like another face.

* About 26000 l.

Lay out what ſum you pleaſe upon your ſon-in-law's houſe: the capital, with the improvements, all go towards the portion of Sophia. As ſhe grows up, ſhe every day gains the affection of all about her: every body ſtrives who ſhall ſtand foremoſt in her good graces; while the deſire of turning my *weakneſs*, and *partiality*, to their own advantage, ſeems by degrees to take place of their former jealouſy. M. du Marſai *could wiſh one of his ſons were ſo happy as to obtain the hand of his charming couſin.* Madam de Bayeux is continually crying up the agreeable perſon and excellent qualities of her's: Madam de Germeuil has for ſome time paſt been taking pains to gain my good will; the young Marquis is one of the moſt amiable creatures: oh, were ſhe to propoſe him to me.—But would Sophia be happy to live under the authority of a woman ſo vain and ſo ſelfiſh? Do not pride and avarice deſtroy every bond of ſociety?

ARTICLE XIII.

I Have received with great pleaſure your preſent to your god-daughter. The fancy of theſe beautiful ſtuffs even ſurpaſſes their richneſs.

The

The incloſed from Sophia is really her own ſtyle; you will hardly believe it, but I aſſure you 'tis matter of fact. I have juſt taken her home from the convent, where ſhe has been theſe ſix months, with Mademoiſelle de Canteleu. Every body ſays, ſhe is grown ſtill handſomer: ſhe is tall, genteel and graceful; her air noble, modeſt, even a little ſerious; the tone of her voice melodious, and ſhe expreſſes herſelf in an eaſy natural manner; nothing affected, either in her language or carriage; ſhe has the rare art to preſerve her ſincerity without deviating in the leaſt from that good breeding, which derives its ſource alone from a deſire to pleaſe, and which ſeems in her an inborn ſenſe of goodneſs. She will be neither a prude nor a coquette; but I am much afraid, dear little creature, ſhe may one day have too much ſenſibility.

ARTICLE XIV.

MY ſilence, as to Sophia, *ſurprizes* you; I have not ſaid a word about her theſe four months. She has been abſent from me. She was very ill of a cold when I ſet out for my country ſeat; imagining I ſhould make

but a ſhort ſtay there, I ſent the little dear back to the convent; M. de Canteleu, who accompanied me, placed his daughter there likewiſe; I came to Paris only yeſterday.

Indeed, my good friend, I ſhall not to day, at leaſt, deſerve the reproach of *forgetting my darling ward.* I am going to tell you a long ſtory about her, I aſſure you; you will call me a prating, doting old woman: be it ſo; but you muſt hear an inſtance of your god-daughter's goodneſs of heart.—When I ſet out, I left her five and twenty louis * for pocket-money. The day after her arrival at the convent, ſhe purchaſed ſome luteſtring and ſattin, with gold and ſilver thread, and ſewing ſilk; the young miſtreſs, her little chamber-maid, and Mademoiſelle de Canteleu, ſet themſelves to embroider, and make a number of work-bags; not a moment's recreation: Sophia would often riſe an hour before her companions. In three months time, this continual labour produced fifteen louis, and put my dear ward in a condition to beſtow forty on a good and indigent woman, who uſed to ſell her flowers and ribbands, in order to enable her to take her husband out of priſon, where he had been confined a conderable time, without being able to raiſe ſo ſmall a ſum.

Notwith-

* A louis is about a guinea.

Notwithſtanding her extreme neceſſities, the honeſt creature did not diſpoſe of the money till my arrival. She brought it me this morning, not daring, ſhe tells me, either to refuſe or keep the gift *of my generous niece, without my approbation.* I have added twenty more louis to it, and given fifty to my dear Sophy. I intend ſhe ſhall receive this ſum yearly over and above her uſual income: it is for the advantage of humanity in general to reward young people of a tender and liberal diſpoſition.

A conſiderable part of my preſent is actually laid out in a pretty baſket for a young boarder: her parents neglect her, want to give her a diſtaſte at the world, and deny her all the little ornaments which her companions wear; ſhe is extremely affected at being deprived of them. Sophia thinks her very unhappy, at not being *beloved by her family.* Alas! how would ſhe lament her own ſad fate, ſhe who annexes ſuch felicity to the conſciouſneſs of being beloved by her family, could ſhe but know, that unconnected with the dear ties of nature, ſurrounded with ſecret enemies, ſhe belongs to nobody, and is *beloved* by me alone.

ARTICLE XV.

THE condition of Sophia, you tell me, ought not to *make me uneaſy; that depends on myſelf.* No one can *preſcribe to me in a voluntary act in which I have a right to expreſs and to authenticate my pleaſure.* A will, my good friend, in favour of Mademoiſelle de Valiere, is not without its difficulties. Conſider ſhe is a ſtranger and unknown; a thouſand precautions are neceſſary, in order to ſecure the diſpoſition of my fortune; the omiſſion of one ſingle formality, would enable my greedy family to annul it: they would conteſt my legacies, would perſecute her, and perhaps ſhe would never enjoy any of it at all.

It would be a ſafer way to marry her; many matches offer; but then it is Mademoiſelle de Saint-Aulay, it is my grand-niece whom they mean. I may alienate part of my eſtate, and diſpoſe of that large and noble manor in Normandy, which I never go to, and ſettle the money upon Sophy. You ſhall ſee; I have more ſchemes than one; I ſhall communicate all of them to you; you will aſſiſt me in determining my choice.

A R-

ARTICLE XVI.

YOU are by no means miſtaken, my good friend, Germeuil is the only one of all my relations whom I could wiſh to ſee the husband of Sophia; and believe me, neither his name nor his titles induce me to give him the preference. I ſet a high value on noble birth; but I value yet more certain qualities which unfortunately do not always attend on it; theſe qualities my nephew poſſeſſes entirely.

It is impoſſible, at nineteen, to be handſomer, better bred, more prudent, or poſſeſſed of more knowledge than the Marquis de Germeuil: not in the leaſt vain, quite free from pride, an indulgent maſter, a tender friend, an attentive relation; he is poſſeſſed of goodneſs, gentleneſs, great ſenſibility, vaſt wit and judgment; he is lively without being giddy headed: he is gay, whilſt his noble and open aſpect, inſpires confidence in thoſe who approach him.

When one looks into the characters of Sophia and him, one would imagine theſe amiable young perſons deſtined mutually to form the delight and happineſs of each other: but then prejudices, that mother ſo proud, ſo ambiti-

ous—To propoſe a young girl who is *unknown* to Madame la Conteſſe de Germeuil; to a lady who thinks of none but the higheſt matches, who would even be for matching with Mademoiſelle de Sauve!

At all events, I have put up my eſtate to ſale. This ſtep will occaſion a world of tattle in the family. My niece will perhaps ſpeak to me about it: this eſtate would ſuit her prodigiouſly well; contiguous to that of her ſon, it would add to the value and agreeableneſs of her own: if ſhe deſires it on my terms, it is her's.

ARTICLE XVII.

SO you are perfectly *charmed* with the picture of my god-daughter? She owed you this preſent. No, the painter has not flattered her. The *freſhneſs of the dawn*, the air of the *youngeſt of the graces*, eyes ſparkling with all *the fire of love?* What, my good old friend, are you acquainted with this ſoft language? I ſhould never have ſuſpected your writing in this poetical ſtyle. But this ſo attracting a form is not alone what muſt captivate the happy husband, deſtined to paſs his days with ſo charming

charming a creature. May ſhe become the companion of de Germeuil, he alone is worthy of her.

I am in treaty about ſelling my eſtate; my niece is in a worſe humour than ever; ſhe pouts at me, ſhe frowns on Sophy——ſhe queſtions my ſervants——ſhe will *ſpeak* to me, I hope ſhe will, and wiſh ſhe may.

ARTICLE XVIII. and laſt.

CONgratulate me, my worthy friend; every thing ſucceeds as I could wiſh. I was at the point of concluding the bargain for my eſtate for ſeven hundred thouſand livres*, when Madam de Germeuil came to deſire the preference. I made no ſecret, that I intended the produce for Sophia's fortune; ſhe coloured, but concealing her vexation ſhe launched out into the praiſes of *my generoſity* to Mademoiſelle de Saint-Aulay; and uſing a vaſt deal of art in an affair in which ſincere plain-dealing would have done as well, *as guardian to her ſon, and conſequently obliged to conſult his intereſt; ſhe could have wiſhed for Mademoiſelle de Sauve, a rich heireſs, allied to the firſt families.* But, *as his*

* Between 27 and 28000*l.*

his mother, entirely taken up with the thoughts of his future happineſs, ſhe ſhould chuſe Sophia, educated by me, inſpired with my principles, for his wife; did ſhe not fear the reproach of having preferred the elevation of her niece to the intereſt of her ſon.

Her artful manner ſet me on my guard: I did not propoſe Sophy; on the contrary, I approved of the marriage of my nephew with Mademoiſelle de Sauve. Madam de Germeuil grew impatient; ſhe asked me for her niece; the whole eſtate, with a poſitive promiſe not to exclude Germeuil from his ſhare in the remaining part of my ſucceſſion.

I concealed my joy; I took a month to conſider of the affair; now, my good friend, pray how am I to act: here are reaſonable terms, but then they are meant for Mademoiſelle de Saint-Aulay. I tremble, at the confidence I muſt repoſe—Madam de Germeuil is intereſted, very intereſted; if I ſhould appoint her ſon univerſal legatee, ſhe would accept of Sophia de Valiere—Perhaps not; ſhe has ſo much pride! to diſcover my ſecret to her in this uncertainty, were an act of imprudence. See, my good friend, think, conſider of it, and let me have your notion about it. I wait your anſwer, which will determine mine.

From

From Pauline to Mademoiſelle de Canteleu.

M. Smith never ſaw the letter from which I have extracted this laſt article. He died before it arrived in Holland, after a long fit of illneſs. It was ſent back ſealed to my miſtreſs, with a packet containing all thoſe he had received ſince her journey to Amſterdam: he left an expreſs order to this purpoſe with his children, a few hours before he expired. But my worthy miſtreſs died twelve days after the receipt of this packet, which I myſelf locked up in the ſame place where ſhe kept the papers relating to Mademoiſelle de Valiere. I entreat Mademoiſelle de Canteleu to obſerve a profound ſilence upon all I have communicated to her; poſſibly I may be blamed for taking and replacing theſe letters in the book of the correſpondence with M. Smith, where they are under ſeal. The looſe tying of the ſtrings enables me to do it with eaſe.

LETTER IV.

WHAT a melancholy detail of particulars, do you deſire of me, my dear? The extracts from the letters of Madam d'Auterive, muſt have informed you how much I

was

was envied and hated by her relations. Their behaviour to me, is a natural conſequence of the ſelfiſhneſs and jealouſy which their ſecret hatred drew upon me. Can I, without renewing my ſorrow, recall to memory a day ſo unfortunate for me? I could wiſh to remove for ever, from my remembrance, every thing that may make me recollect my former ſituation, the ſudden overthrow of my fortune, the loſs of my only ſupport, and that of all my hopes.

O my ſiſter, my friend! I have need of ſtrength, and of courage, to enable me to ſupport the view of my preſent condition, to accuſtom myſelf to look upon the future with leſs trouble and dread. In ſpite of all my reflections, my heart rejects every ſcheme that neceſſity forces me to determine on. I find it difficult to ſubmit, to decide any way; I lament my misfortunes, and come to no reſolution.

It has been propoſed to me to live with a lady, who has juſt now undertaken to embroider a compleat ſet of furniture for her apartment: ſhe deſires ſome aſſiſtance in this tedious work, and is looking out for ſome young people a little above the rank of what they commonly call workwomen. Pauline thinks this place will do for me. Nothing prevents my

my accepting of it, but my deep melancholy. Am I in a condition to preſent myſelf before this lady; I, whoſe eyes are continually bathed in tears? How can I avoid ſhedding them? On a ſuppoſition that my ſituation were leſs diſagreeable, could I help regretting the loſs of Madam d'Auterive? Could I avoid lamenting that cruel, that ſudden ſeparation? Could her fortune have made me amends for her loſs? They who are in preſent poſſeſſion of it, have already baniſhed her from their remembrance —Her memory will for ever live in the heart of the unhappy orphan whom ſhe loved.

Oh my Hortenſia! how much has one hour, one inſtant altered my ſituation! and with it, the behaviour of ſo many people! What a feeble tye unites that ſociety, of which I once made part, but from which I am now caſt out! with what haſte do they who courted, who careſſed, who flattered me, now avoid me!

The moment the ſad event was declared to the relations of Madam d'Auterive, they ran to her houſe, and aſſembled in the great ſalloon. There they waited for the arrival of thoſe whoſe preſence was neceſſary at the opening of the will: they imagined one would be found, and that it would be in my favour.

When all were come, except only the Marquis de Germeuil, who was ſtill in Provence with

with the regiment he commands, Madam de Bayeux came to fetch me; I had been enquired for ſeveral times: I was in my room, on my knees, my head reclined on Pauline; we were both weeping bitterly. She regretted her gentle, generous miſtreſs; ſhe lamented with me and on my account, repeating, *O! Mademoiſelle, what a loſs! My God! What a loſs have you ſuffered!*

I inſiſted in vain, on not coming down; Madam de Bayeux aſſured me I could not well avoid it; I followed her into the ſalloon, every body roſe up to receive me: Madam de Germeuil embraced me ſeveral times, her couſins careſſed me extremely. I was unable to ſpeak, I could ſcarce ſupport myſelf: M. du Marſai ſaid aloud; *this is doubtleſs the ſole heireſs. It is very probable ſhe is*, anſwered Madam de Bayeux. *I believe and wiſh ſhe may*, added Madam de Germeuil. They ſat down and began the ſearch and examination of the papers.

No will was found. However they ſeemed poſitive that Madam d'Auterive muſt have made one. Thoſe fine japan Cabinets which adorn the ſalloon alone remained to be viſited: they opened three of them. The laſt ſhut with a ſecret ſpring; they were preparing to force

force it, when Madam de Germeuil, vexed to ſee ſo rare a piece of japan broken, called for Pauline, and aſked her whether ſhe did not know the way to open it? The poor girl ſeemed quite ſtruck, and confounded: ſhe heſitated long before ſhe anſwered, but ſeeing herſelf hard preſſed, ſhe begged leave to ſpeak a word to Madam de Germeuil; this was allowed her.

Pauline ſpoke very low, her hands joined, with a ſupplicating air; *I ſuppreſs papers!* Cried out aloud Madam de Germeuil, *reſerve the peruſal of them to myſelf? How can they relate to Sophia, how concern her alone? We have all an intereſt in theſe papers of my aunt.* This ſaid, ſhe led her to the cabinet, and ordered her to open it. Pauline obeyed with tears. They found the paper written by the hand of Madam d'Auterive, a copy of the deeds which authenticated its truth, the bundle of her letters to M. Smith, ſtill ſealed up as ſhe had received them a few days before, and her laſt letters ſent back from Holland under a double cover.

The requeſt of Pauline to Madam de Germeuil had juſt raiſed an extreme curioſity about the papers *which concerned me alone.* They immediately began to read the ſmall papers of Madam

Madam d'Auterive. They were wholly at a loſs to conceive how this narrative, apparently ſo foreign to all the heirs, could poſſibly relate to me any more than to the others: at the paſſage where Madam d'Auterive ſays, *my grand-niece was carried off in a convulſion*, a cry of ſurprize was heard, all eyes were fixed on me. *Mademoiſelle de Saint-Aulay dead! who is ſhe then, who ſupplies her place here?* was the univerſal voice; the concluſion of the narrative diſcovered my whole ſtory.

Before the reading of this paper, little attentive to what paſſed about me, my tears flowed only, becauſe Madam d'Auterive was no more. I never once thought of legacies, nor of the ſhare I was to have in her fortune. The repeated ſounds of *unknown girl*, and *ſuppoſitious niece*, brought me unhappily to myſelf, by diſcovering to me my cruel deſtiny.

Imagine, my dear, my aſtoniſhment, my conſternation! to find myſelf a ſtranger in the midſt of this company, when I thought myſelf ſurrounded by my neareſt relations, and my ſincereſt friends; alas! I knew not how much hatred and envy the tenderneſs of Madam d'Auterive had excited againſt me. Good God! what a moment, what a terrible moment! to be aſſaulted with contemptuous expreſſions,

to be the object of the moſt ſhocking reflections, to ſee Madam de Germeuil cruelly endeavouring to put me out of countenance, at a time, when my misfortune called for pity and comfort—my heart was ready to break, I fell ſenſeleſs at the feet of Madam du Marſai.

Drawn thither by the cries of Pauline, Madam d'Auterive's chamber-maid flew to my aſſiſtance; they carried me to my room, and ſtrove to recover me. On opening my eyes, I perceived them all round me; they bathed my hands with their tears: theſe poor girls were deeply afflicted with the diſcovery that appeared to affect me alone: they ſeemed to have a double loſs when they heard that I was neither the niece, nor the heireſs of their good, their reſpected miſtreſs.

Pauline, who had the office of houſe-keeper, was again ſent for back into the ſalloon, where ſhe found the whole family in great agitation; they had juſt opened the packet of the letters of Madam d'Auterive to M. Smith, in order to ſearch for ſome lights into the ſums actually remaining in Holland. By the extract which is ſtill in your hands, you may eaſily imagine the indignation of the Counteſs de Germeuil on finding in theſe letters a too faithful picture of her character, and the expoſing of a project which ſhe had ſo carefully concealed.

There

There aroſe a general murmur againſt her; they reproached her with her intereſted views, with her inſatiable avarice; with the marriage ſhe had propoſed to her aunt in order to make ſure of the entire reverſion of her fortune. Even they who, actuated by the ſame motives, had underhand, though without ſucceſs, uſed the ſame artifices, had yet the confidence to treat her ſchemes as baſe and diſhonourable intrigues. Madam de Germeuil juſtified herſelf with haughtineſs, abſolutely diſavowed any deſign of marrying me to her ſon, the *miſtake*, theſe *fooliſh ideas* of her aunt ſprung from her *extreme*, her *ridiculous prepoſſeſſion in my favour*, and poſſibly from ſome words *thrown out at random*, merely with a view to *ſound her inclinations*.

My name too frequently repeated during this ſharp altercation, drew down on me all the malice and anger of the Counteſs; ſhe run out in complaints of the *weakneſs* of Madam d'Auterive, and of *ſo unwarrantable an impoſition*: why then bring up this orphan as her niece, give her ſo diſtinguiſhed an education, make her be *reſpected* and almoſt *adored*, by all her relations? What, in order to ſecure her from *the mortifying reproaches of the world!* with the ſame view doubtleſs ſhe wanted to enrich a ſtranger,

ſtranger, a *child of that ſort!* what muſt become of the *girl?* Of what ſervice could ſo much acquired knowledge, ſo many uſeleſs talents be to her, unleſs it were *to fill her head with pride?* The habit of living at her eaſe, would render her preſent ſituation more hard to ſupport, might make her *forget her virtuous principles*, poſſibly induce her *to ſacrifice them to the temptation of returning to that pomp and ſplendor in which ſhe had been ſo injudiciouſly bred up.*

By this hard hearted manner of anticipating my future misfortunes, Madam de Germeuil ſufficiently declared her intention of abandoning me to my fate. Diſpenſe with my repeating her conjectures with regard to my birth, my condition, and even the morals of my unfortunate Parents: you will likewiſe excuſe my entering into all the particulars of the propoſals, *offered for my advantage* by Madam de Bayeux, and by herſelf. Had theſe ladies intended a ſettlement for the daughter of the loweſt mechanic, or of the meaneſt ſervant of the houſe, nothing could have occurred to their thoughts more cruel or more humbling. Believe me, my dear, this family have meanly revenged themſelves on the poor, unknown Sophy, for all the feigned careſſes ſo prodigally laviſhed for many

years on Sophia de Saint-Aulay, in hopes of ſharing with her a rich inheritance.

They all parted. Every body went away without vouchſafing to ſee me, or enquiring about my preſent ſituation: They left me to the care of common ſervants; I was even ſet on a level with them: I heard Madam du Marſai call out to Pauline on the ſtair-caſe, *Sophy may remain here till ſuch time as proper meaſures are taken with reſpect to the maids of my aunt, and her.*

But it is now very late; my eyes, fatigued and heavy, call for reſt. And yet I expect to find none. Since the death of Madam d'Auterive, I have never taſted the pleaſure of undiſturbed ſleep: if the depreſſion of my ſpirits bring on a temporary drowſineſs, I wake with troubleſome and frightful dreams, and preſently relapſe into ſorrow, grief, and devouring cares.

Ten in the morning.

Pauline has juſt delivered me your letter. I read with aſtoniſhment the copy of Madam de Germeuil's to your couſin. Indeed her tedious apology ſurprizes me. Why ſhould Madam de Germeuil juſtify herſelf, when no body accuſes her? By defending her conduct,

by

by laying open the motives which *may ſerve to excuſe it*, does ſhe not ſeem to confeſs that it may very juſtly be blamed?

So then I have it ſeems *withdrawn myſelf from the authority of my protectors? An inſolent ſtrain of ingratitude* has induced me to retire without waiting the iſſue of the *deliberation* of the heirs of Madam d'Auterive? An *ill-timed haughtineſs* has made me neglect, *even diſdain*, the *favours* of an opulent family, *diſpoſed* to ſerve me!

O Good God! what mean ſubterfuges, what a falſe imputation! But it is highly neceſſary to have an anſwer ready for thoſe whoſe curious enquiries importune me: they muſt be told in what manner *this opulent family* have thought proper to treat the darling ward of their relation; ſhe muſt be proved to be unworthy of the concern which the friends and acquaintance of Madam d'Auterive may have taken in the ſettlement of an unhappy young woman, and Madam de Germeuil has written to your couſin merely for that purpoſe.

If from being long accuſtomed to conciliate the regard, and to ſee myſelf the object of the moſt tender affection of all about me, I am become too ſenſible to neglect, and to the contempt of ſo many perſons whom I looked

on as my beſt friends; if the involuntary reſentment of my heart, for ſuch inſulting expreſſions, deſerve the name of *inſolent ingratitude*, Madam de Germeuil accuſes me with juſtice: if not to beg aſſiſtance, be to *diſdain* a family *well diſpoſed in my favour*: if my retiring from an houſe where *I was permitted to remain*, be an action *bold*, and *offenſive* to my *protectors*: I will bluſh before my dear Hortenſia, for having followed the impulſe of an *ill timed haughtineſs*. But on a ſuppoſition that I had all this pride, whence does Madam de Germeuil collect the certainty that it is in me an *unbecoming ſentiment?* Forgive me, my amiable, my conſoling friend! I find that being too much taken up with the letter of Madam de Germeuil, I forget to thank you for the repeated aſſurances of your generous friendſhip. How pleaſing it is to find you ſtill the ſame, when the reſt of mankind are ſo changed in regard to me!

I muſt now acquaint you with the place of my retreat. Finding myſelf alone in an houſe where I had no right to remain, I ſent for Madam de Beaumont, the dealer in ribbands, to whom we did that ſmall ſervice, when we were laſt together in the convent. With what a zeal did this good, this grateful creature

embrace

embrace the opportunity of being uſeful to me! ſhe is a plain, honeſt, reaſonable, and laborious woman; ſhe has been a widow ſix months; a ſmall legacy has put her in a condition to enlarge her trade, by adding to it the article of modes. I occupy two rooms in her houſe, pretty enough, and very neatly furniſhed; they adjoin to her warehouſe. We have agreed upon ſuch terms as ſuit my preſent circumſtances. I am able to maintain myſelf ſome little time in this ſituation; it is by no means diſagreeable; and I have nothing to complain of, but that I am ſerved with too aſſiduous an attention.

Farewell, my dear Hortenſia, do not attempt to juſtify me in the opinion of your couſin. Leave Madam de Germeuil to applaud her own, and blame my conduct. I ſhall always honour her as the niece of Madam d'Auterive, and the mother of the Marquis de Germeuil. Gratitude and friendſhip muſt for ever command a total ſilence with regard to her character: I complain leſs of her abandoning, than hating me. Suffer her to treat me as *haughty*, and *ungrateful*, but never diſcover the ſecret intrigues, which my confidence in you and the neceſſity I am under of

explaining the reaſons of my proceeding, have induced me to lay before you. Poſſibly I may reproach myſelf one day for the reſentment and bitter terms which have neceſſarily fallen from me, during this tedious ſtory: Our misfortunes often make us partial. After all, my dear, what right have I to the eſteem, the affection, and the protection of the heirs of Madam d'Auterive? Alas! who in the world is obliged to intereſt themſelves on my account?

LETTER V.

NO, my dear, I am not *comforted*, but I am reſigned, and begin to look round me with leſs terror: I know I have ſenſibility; but do not think myſelf weak. A change ſo great, ſo ſudden, ſo unforeſeen, had thrown my ſoul into dejection: conſternation and terror had overwhelmed my ſpirits. During thoſe firſt moments, my eyes were open to my loſſes, and ſhut to every reſource: the condition in which I had always lived appeared to me the only one in which I could live; I trembled at the thoughts of falling from it. And why ſhould I not fall from it? What right have I to riches, ſplendor, pomp, to brilliant hopes?

What

What mark is ſet on me to diſtinguiſh me from the crowd of unhappy wretches, tied down to labour, condemned to ſervitude? A fooliſh pride miſled me, obtruding its vain chimeras on my gloomy reflections: when one is nothing, my dear, to what can one pretend? How could an unknown girl preſume to put herſelf on a level with that ſmall number of mortals cheriſhed by fortune; deſtined by her to eaſe, and to an undiſturbed enjoyment, in the boſom of voluptuouſneſs, of the induſtrious labour of the poor.

I will turn my eyes from this claſs which belongs not to me, and will boldly enter into that wherein I am thrown—Do not be too much affected, my lovely Hortenſia, an humble condition ſhall never debaſe the heart of your friend. I owe to Madam d'Auterive thoſe precepts and leſſons of virtue which will enable me to bear up under this ſevere trial. She taught me to diſtinguiſh honour from what the vulgar call by that name; mine ſhall not depend on the place I hold in the world, but on the inward ſentiments of my mind. So long as I ſhall preſerve my own eſteem, ſo long as my heart ſhall not reproach me, ſo long as Hortenſia ſhall call me her companion, her ſiſter, I ſhall never bluſh at being unknown, forſaken, poor,

Yes, I have received ſeveral letters from the Marquis de Germeuil. Could you poſſibly think him *inſenſible to my misfortune?* He is affected with it, ſincerely affected with it. His expreſſions are gentle and tender; indeed, my dear, they are comforting. Afflicted at the *hard-heartedneſs* of his mother; aſhamed of the *unworthy behaviour of his family*, he asks me whether *an heir of Madam d'Auterive* may *preſume* to wait on me.

Do not confound the Marquis de Germeuil with his avaricious relations. He loved Madam d'Auterive; he retnins the memory of her virtues; he neither hates nor deſpiſes the ſad orphan whom ſhe honoured with her protection. He ſtill vouchſafes to call her *his couſin*, to ſhew her the ſame deference, the ſame attachment; he *pities*, he *reſpects* her; he *burns with eagerneſs to ſee her*; he ſpeaks much of her aunt; he *reveres her memory! he laments her loſs.* The Marquis de Germeuil weeps for Madam d'Auterive! Oh! let him come, we will mingle our ſorrows, our ſighs, our tears, our groans! he ſhall be my relation, brother, friend—Alas! ſhall I ſtill venture to call him by theſe names, once ſo pleaſing to him?

So your affairs then begin to take *a more favourable turn.* May your hopes not be diſappointed. The happineſs of my dear Hortenſia

ſia would eaſe my heart of one half of its ſorrows. But why poſtpone till another opportunity the *intereſting* queſtion you want to ask me? At all times, you will find me ready to anſwer you in all the ſincerity of my heart. Adieu.

LETTER VI.

IS that, my dear, the *embarraſſing queſtion?* You *heſitated*, you *feared* to put it. What! do you make uſe of expreſſions ſo guarded, ſo cautiouſly conveyed to ask me whether I will *conſent to live with you*, to ſhare your apartment in that Abbey in which we paſſed *ſo many undiſturbed moments*, where *we were ſo happy together?*

On a ſuppoſition that you are rich and independent, whence can ariſe the doubt? Can the companion of your childhood, accuſtomed to read your very ſoul, bluſh to accept of an aſylum *with you?* Can ſhe have any *reluctance* to owe you her tranquillity, her happineſs? When I wiſhed for riches, in order to beſtow them on you, and to keep you at Paris, that you might be near me, did I offend you, Hortenſia? O my dear! do you too think me capable of an *ill-timed pride?*

I would refuſe ſuch aſſiſtance as vanity and an inſulting compaſſion might offer me: but I ſhould deſpiſe my pride, if fearing to lay myſelf open to the tender ſentiment of gratitude, I ſhould obſtinately deprive my friend of the dear pleaſure of ſerving me.

Monſieur de Germeuil is arrived. I ſaw him yeſterday. I expected his viſit with a kind of impatience: I hoped to find comfort in the converſation of a relation of Madam d'Auterive, of a relation beloved by her: I was miſtaken; his preſence, his tears have awakened all my ſorrows. What a ſenſibility of heart he has! how it is moved with our common loſs! *His hopes of happineſs* are now at a *great diſtance*; *he tells me* the death of his aunt *has blaſted his moſt pleaſing proſpects*. His *proſpects!* what then did he expect of Madam d'Auterive?

I find my ſpirits too much oppreſſed to write any more. My diſappointments have affected my conſtitution: my health is impaired; I cannot ſleep; I cannot reliſh any kind of food: the affectionate aſſiduity of Pauline and of Madam Beaumont is all to no purpoſe; for nature calls for nothing, and I cannot force my ſtomach: it is no wonder my life is ſo melancholy, ſo ſedentary; my application is

too

too aſſiduous; my imagination is ſo ſtrong, it wanders over ſuch gloomy objects—But why does this dark melancholy make me enter into ſuch uſeleſs details, is it in order to afflict you? Adieu, my dear Hortenſia.

LETTER VII.

TAKE courage, my dear friend, I am better. My fever has left me. After a whole month paſt without writing to you, I myſelf am able to give you proofs of my weak, my painful exiſtence; I am recovering they ſay; as to my own part, I find myſelf totally depreſſed, and my anguiſh is almoſt inſupportable. As ſoon as ever I am capable of an hour's application, I will thank my dear Hortenſia for her ſolicitude, her offers, her tenderneſs, and that goodneſs of heart which made her ſacrifice, to my ſuppoſed wants, the ſole poſſeſſion ſhe at preſent enjoys. Adieu, my dear, lovely companion! ceaſe to fear, my life is no longer in danger.

LETTER VIII.

YES, my dear, I ſtill continue to recover; I begin to enjoy better ſpirits; my colour returns; I no longer relapſe into thoſe long ſwoonings which endangered my life; but my languor is not removed; it is become habitual, it is the effect of a deep melancholy; time may diminiſh it; to me it ſeems impoſſible it ſhould ever wholly ſubdue it.

How, pray, ſhould I be ſilent on the affecting proof you have given me of your love? Why ſhould you be offended with the expreſſions of my gratitude? I was more moved than ſurprized at ſeeing your casket in the hands of Pauline. It ſhall be ſent back to you tueſday evening by a truſty hand. I would have accepted of your aſſiſtance, if want of money had reduced me to any diſagreeable extremity: what! ſend me your *jewels* for me to pledge or *ſell* them! Oh, my dear Hortenſia, the remembrance of ſo noble a generoſity, of ſo true a friendſhip, ſhall always lie neareſt my heart. I will never mention it to you, becauſe you forbid me; but it ſhall remain always engraven on my memory.

An

An unlooked for favour, is become a moſt uſeful reſource to me. After many deliberations, in which M. de Germeuil took the lead, the heirs of Madam d'Auterive have come to an agreement on a point which has long been conteſted. They have ordered Pauline to deliver me my linen, my laces and my clothes. The valuation of my casket, my jewels, and my goods, has redoubled their animoſity againſt me. They ſay Madam de Germeuil cannot bear to hear my name mentioned. Alas! I cannot think without ſorrow—Oh, my dear, it is moſt afflicting to be hated!

I have diſcharged the expences of my illneſs, by the ſale of two pieces of India ſtuff, too rich to be of any uſe to me at preſent. I imagined myſelf to be indebted to ſeveral people, but M. de Germeuil, by obliging Pauline to accept of a pretty conſiderable ſum, became my only creditor. I have reimburſed the girl for what ſhe had laid out, and reſtored the whole.—Good God! my dear, can Madam de Germeuil have been in the right? Have I pride and haughtineſs? Senſible to the generous attention of the Marquis, filled with gratitude, I was not able to thank him without bluſhing, without ſhedding tears.

I think

I think my misfortune has redoubled his friendſhip. His firſt viſit excited a great deal of emotion and confuſion in me. We both wept bitterly before we were able to ſpeak. At the ſight of him, I forgot the diſtance which fortune had put between us, ſince our ſeparation. Indeed his air ſomewhat more reſerved, and his expreſſions leſs familiar, brought me back to a juſter way of thinking, not without ſome concern: but then his attention during my long illneſs, his anxiety, his aſſiduity, his eagerneſs to oblige me, all theſe convince me I am ſtill dear to him. He comes ſeveral times a day to ſhare the irkſomeneſs of my ſolitude, and though he is himſelf wrapt up in an unuſual penſiveneſs, he uſes every art to divert me from mine.

I cannot poſſibly write any longer; my head is ſtill exceeding weak. Farewell, my dear Hortenſia; accept my ſincere thanks, and take it in good part that I do not enlarge on ſo noble a procedure as your own, which cannot but fill my heart with ſentiments of gratitude.

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LETTER IX.

CEASE, my dear friend, to fill your imagination with theſe *tormenting ideas*; I can ſtill maintain myſelf ſeveral months in my preſent ſituation. I have need of time to reſume my ſtrength, revive my dejected ſoul, and recover that calm, at leaſt in appearance, ſo neceſſary to thoſe who are to live under the eyes of others, and depend on their favours. How ſhall I be able to appear at this very time before the lady whoſe protection is promiſed me? A gloomy air is eaſily miſtaken for ill temper; it deſtroys confidence; it gives a diſadvantageous impreſſion. They who have no intereſt in our melancholy, ſeldom forgive the irkſomeneſs it inſpires.

Why, my dear, why *afflict* yourſelf at ſeeing me *diſpoſed to embrace this offer?* I would not do it, were it in my power to chooſe a leſs diſagreeable condition. *I may ſtay with Madam de Beaumont*—It is true, I may ſo; but I do not know whether I ought: new circumſtances require new reflections.

When I formed my firſt plan, I found by the calculation of ſeveral days, that I ſhould be

be able to maintain myſelf in every thing *neceſſary* by a conſtant application to work. A month's illneſs, and my long weakneſs, have taught me by experience how chargeable this forced interruption of my work muſt be. The accidental loſs of time, and the extraordinary expences, would reduce me to very diſagreeable extremities. And yet I ſhould like to preſerve my liberty, my independence, and to avoid the wretched ſtate of ſubjection, that all muſt endure who live under the protection of the great. But then, will reaſon, will decency permit me to live alone?

I am very young, my dear Hortenſia, and little uſed to govern myſelf by my own underſtanding: if that ſhould miſlead me! A worthy good woman, but without any knowledge of the world; a faithful and good natured ſervant, long accuſtomed to fall in with all my deſires; theſe are my guides: but are they ſafe ones? For ſome time paſt, I begin to perceive that without having any thing to fear from our own reproaches, we ſhould ſtill be on our guard againſt thoſe of the world.

My youth and ſituation require on my part an extreme attention to all my ſteps; if I were accuſed, who would undertake my defence? I dread the world, and its malicious remarks—

Are you not ſurpriſed, my dear, how an afflicted imagination magnifies our ideas, leads them far beyond reality, and even probability: and what is this world, that is to be my cenſurer? Who in this wide univerſe will vouchſafe to examine, to drop a look on me? Alas! you alone are intereſted in this obſcure, painful, and forlorn being.

It is the common effect of a gloomy melancholy to raiſe in us vague fears, and to throw us into ſuſpicion and anxiety. Would you believe it? M. de Germeuil makes me uneaſy, perplexes me; I cannot account for it: His ſentiments for me are the ſame I always wiſhed to inſpire him with; my own have not changed, and yet that friendſhip, formerly ſo ſweet, ſo natural, taſted with ſo much pleaſure, is now no longer a gentle impulſe: it is ſtill agreeable, ſtill warm; but is no longer calm. Indeed, this friendſhip is become the ſubject of my moſt ſerious reflections.

Do not ſpeak to your couſin, *do not riſk the trial. Move her in my favour?* Oh! by no means, I beſeech you. If ſhe is apprehenſive *of failing in the firſt advances ſhe makes you*, would it not be imprudent to propoſe to her the rendering them ſtill more conſiderable? *I*

do certainly wiſh to live with you, but not at her houſe. I conjure you, my Hortenſia, leave this project. Shall I ſpeak truth? I do not enough eſteem the character of that lady to conſent to receive any favour from her. O good God! if I thought it becoming to lay myſelf under obligations, I ſhould have no uneaſineſs as to the future. Monſieur de Germeuil is but too preſſing on that article—If I refuſe his aſſiſtance, ſhall I accept of that which you might *beg* for me; this would certainly offend him, and I am very far from having ſuch a deſign. Farewell, my dear; give over your project, I conjure you to do it.

LETTER X.

I Am as much concerned at the death of your *Reporter** as you can be; in your preſent ſituation, it is a cruel event: the probity of that worthy magiſtrate gave room to hope for a ſpeedy determination. Much time will be neceſſary before any other can inform himſelf of the nature of the caſe, and this tedious waiting is a real puniſhment. But, can I read without tears, my dear, that you are doubly

* A Counſellor whoſe buſineſs it is previouſly to examine the proofs and other matters relating to the action, and to make his report to the judges: the manner of doing this, has generally great weight in determining the cauſe.

doubly affected with this loſs on my account? It *counteracts*, it *prolongs the ſucceſs of the favourite project of your heart*; your *thoughts*, your *wiſhes are wholly taken up with this retreat, where we may be together!* amiable, generous girl! dwell not for the preſent on that project, it affects you too deeply. There is no likelihood of any change in my condition; comfort that warm, that tender heart, with the certainty of being always able to find an opportunity to oblige me; calm your anxious mind; do not let me reflect with ſorrow, that my ſituation *adds a weight to all your ſufferings.*

Madam de Moncenai is ſtill in the country. She has been already ſpoken to; on her return, when introduced to her as a relation of Madam de Beaumont, if I am accepted, I cannot refuſe to be with her. Why do you annex the idea of *ſervitude* to this *place?* It may poſſibly require ſome complaiſance; but what condition in life can diſpenſe with it?

The Marchioneſs de Moncenai is rich, young, happy: ſhe will queſtionleſs be gay, gentle, humane; obliged only to aſſiſt her in her work, why may not my ſituation at her houſe be eaſy? Do not diſcourage me, my dear friend; do not add to the ſecret reluctance, and diſtaſte—Perhaps I am but too fond of that liberty I am about to ſacrifice.

Pauline

Pauline has juſt delivered me your letter. I opened it with eagerneſs, and peruſed it with vexation. You have *experienced how diſagreeable it is to meet with a refuſal.* If you were leſs *zealous*, in your obliging wiſhes, you would have waited for my anſwer; it would have ſpared you this *mortification.* I ſhould be ſorry that Madam de Germeuil knew the ſtep you have taken; her ſon might hear of it, and ſuſpect me to have ſet you to work: certainly his heart would be offended with ſo ſtrange a conduct. Should I ſuffer this friend ſo affected with the overthrow of my fortune, ſo aſſiduous in his endeavours to ſoften the rigour of my ſituation; ſhould I ſuffer this friend to think that I have meanly ſtooped to beg the aſſiſtance of your couſin, after having been proud enough to reject his offers? But no more of this. *I complain of your imprudence,* my dear? I ſhould think myſelf ungrateful were I to complain of any thing in you.

LETTER XI.

YOU cannot *conceive* my *uneaſineſs*, with reſpect to the *aſſiduities of the Marquis de Germeuil: they appear to you as the natural conſequence of an intimacy formed in our earlieſt infancy*, kept up *by a remarkable conformity in our taſte and ſentiments*. Admitting this conformity, ſo much to my honour, would not the inequality of our fortunes form a new obſtacle to our union?

My dear Hortenſia, you conſider me as ſtill with Madam d'Auterive, living under her eye, deriving conſequence from my appearance, from her tenderneſs, and from the aſſiduity of all who endeavoured to pleaſe me. View me now in a ſcanty lodging, dejected, alone, in a plain dreſs; employed, not as formerly, in running over the keys of an harpſicord, or the ſtrings of a lute, in drawing a landſcape, or making extracts from what I read; but working laborioufly in order to draw ſome ſmall pittance from my labour, often tied to an hour, forced to make diſpatch, to ſubmit to every inconvenience, and often to ſpend part of the night in compleating ſome piece of finery impatiently waited for.

Oh!

Oh! my dear, it is no longer Mademoiſelle de Saint-Aulay, no longer the grand-niece of Madam d'Auterive, who receives the viſits, the frequent viſits of the Marquis de Germeuil; it is Sophia de Valiere, Madam Beaumont's apprentice, ſpending half the day in the converſation of a titled, rich, handſome, amiable young man, who has no other connection with her, but what proceeds from habit, and, perhaps, from compaſſion.

No ties of blood connect us; his mother hates me; as a ſtranger to the eyes of all his family, does it become me to receive him? Himſelf ſeems to fear leſt the world ſhould perceive the regard he ſtill has for me. He comes alone, on foot, or in a carriage which is none of his own. Why conceal himſelf? Whence this affected air of myſtery, if he did not imagine that his or my conduct might poſſibly lie open to cenſure: if Madam de Germeuil ſhould hear of the Marquis's viſits, ſhould be angry, ſhould preſume to imagine.—Has ſhe not already ſaid that *I might forget my virtuous principles, ſacrifice them*—Heaven avert the cruel omen!

I ought to ſpeak to the Marquis de Germeuil; do not you think ſo, my dear? I ought to impart to him my reflections, my doubts,

doubts, my fears. Can he think it ſtrange that I ſhould be careful of my reputation? Shall I neglect the only bleſſing that it is in my power to acquire or preſerve? Yes, I will ſpeak to him, I will beg of him to viſit me leſs frequently; I will open my heart to him; his will never be offended with my confidence, with my friendſhip.—Oh! I am not altered in my ſentiments for M. de Germeuil! in another ſituation, in happier circumſtances I would not baniſh the complaiſant, the amiable companion of the pleaſures of my childhood: he is very dear to me! he will be always ſo. But one of the miſeries attached to my preſent condition, is, that I have not the choice of my comforts, and to be obliged to make a new ſacrifice when my poverty has already left me ſo deſtitute.

Farewell, my dear Hortenſia, continue to love an unfortunate being, whoſe only pleaſure it is to think ſhe can never become indifferent to you.

LET-

LETTER XII.

YOU have juſt found *a zealous friend in the parliament of Roan*; I give you joy with all my heart, my dear: *your hopes revive?* May you be happy, compleatly happy! is the ardent wiſh of your friend.

I am truly ſorry to find you are ſo averſe to my plan of conduct. I would wiſh to ſatisfy you, and not go to live with Madam de Moncenai, but wait for the intereſting deciſion of your law-ſuit; but, as I have already told you, I think I ought not; every thing conſpires to induce me to purſue the deſign you urge me to quit.

Do not be angry with me, do not accuſe me of obſtinacy; ceaſe to call me your *inflexible friend*: did you know the ſtrange ſituation of my mind, you would never exhort me to preſerve that independence of which you warn me: *I ſhall one day regret the loſs.*

I know not whether my misfortune, and the decay of my ſtrength during my illneſs, have altered my conſtitution, deſtroyed the evenneſs of my ſpirits, and affected my temper; but I am no longer the ſame perſon; baffled, and wavering,

I cannot

I cannot determine my will. You know I had reſolved to beg of Monſ. de Germeuil to give over his viſits, or at leaſt to make them leſs frequent. I imagined I might ingenuouſly confeſs to him the cauſe of my uneaſineſs: well, my dear, every time I prepared myſelf to make this requeſt, and to diſcover the motives of it, an inexpreſſible perplexity, inward confuſion, and ſtrange emotion, ſtopt my faultring voice; my lips could not pronounce *come no more*; I was afraid of appearing capricious, unjuſt, ungrateful; I feared to offend, to diſpleaſe, to afflict him. Whilſt I looked on him, I forgot the force of all thoſe reaſons that were to juſtify ſo uncivil, and ſo unkind a requeſt. I muſed, I ſighed; my eyes were full of tears, and I remained in ſtupid ſilence.

Shall I tell you all? I know not what contrariety of ſentiment, whoſe difficulty I could not foreſee, ſeems to deter me from the explanation of my purpoſes: I would fain receive no longer the viſits of Monſ. de Germeuil: I think it decent to *will* it; but if I examine myſelf, if I am ſincere with myſelf, what *I will*, that I do not *wiſh*. No, my dear, I do not deſire the abſence of Monſ. de Germeuil. If any abatement in his friendſhip, if any diſſatisfaction at my ſolitary ſituation, or if my

habitual melancholy ſhould induce him to make his viſits leſs frequent, it would give me real uneaſineſs. His preſence ſuſpends, ſoftens my pain, diſſipates my languor, and gives life and motion to my ſpirits: whether he ſpeaks or keeps ſilence, my gloomy ſadneſs leſſens while he is near me; it returns, it redoubles when he leaves me. After having repeated to myſelf all day long; *I ought not, I will not ſee him any more*; I wait with impatience, the hour when I am to ſee him; if he lingers beyond that, every inſtant ſeems of an inſupportable length; but if he comes before, I am pleaſed with him, his impatience obliges me, and if I dared, I would thank him for it.

From my earlieſt infancy my regard for the Marquis de Germeuil has always been exceeding tender. It uſed to take up all my thoughts; but it gave me no pain—on the contrary, it added to my happineſs: and you muſt remember, my dear Hortenſia! when the ſight of the Marquis de Germeuil, invited us to pleaſure; the time is not long ſince paſſed, when both of us cried out for joy, ſo ſoon as he was announced at his aunt's. How comes it then that at preſent—Yes, I will preſerve that friendſhip, though I am not at liberty to enjoy it. I give over the project of ſpeaking to Monſ. de Germeuil,

and

and laying open my fears to him : I will ask nothing of him ; I will not baniſh hence the nephew of Madam d'Auterive ; I will not uſe a friend ſo cruelly, who is worthy of every regard from me ; never, never, will I tell him, *come no more*. And why did I mean to tell him ſo ? Am not I on the point of going to live with Madam de Moncenai ? You aſſure me I ſhall be *miſerable* there ; what ſignifies it, my dear ; I can ſupport grief, ſorrow, humiliation, but cannot offend the Marquis de Germeuil. I will not give him any juſt grounds to complain of me ; he ſhall never accuſe me of caprice ; he ſhall never ſuſpect me of levity of ſentiment, or an inconſtancy of inclination of which my heart and underſtanding are equally incapable.

Forgive me, my dear, if I follow not a counſel which the moſt generous friendſhip has dictated to you. I may engage with Madam de Moncenai, without prejudicing the plan *formed for our common felicity*. As ſoon as you are in poſſeſſion of your eſtate, I will make you the arbiter of my condition. You require my *word of honour*. Very well, my charming friend, I give it you, I promiſe, I ſwear to my dear Hortenſia, to ſubmit to every law which her noble heart ſhall think fit to impoſe on me.

LETTER, XIII.

GOOD God! what a ſurprize, what an emotion, do you occaſion me! What, how, whence comes it, why do you think, my dear?—I cannot tell you whether *your notions are juſtly founded.* I am little acquainted with the effect of a ſentiment I have ever been taught to dread; I am ignorant whether my heart be *ſuſceptible* of the paſſion with which you *think it affected*; I do not deſire to *inſpire it*; I do not think *I feel it*: but you alarm me, by aſſuring me *it is often concealed under the appearances of an innocent friendſhip.* Aye! and how long then have you been ſtudying this dangerous paſſion? Who taught you the art to diſcern an *involuntary* tenderneſs; an *irreſiſtible* inclination, from that calm peaceful affection, whoſe ſweet and gentle impreſſions, warm the hearts of relations and friends? I do not remember ever to have heard you diſtinguiſh between theſe two kinds of attachment.

Allow me to leave your embaraſſing queſtion unanſwered. I acquaint you *with every motion of my ſoul!* Why, I do not endeavour to conceal them! but if theſe emotions ſurprize me; if they vary every moment; if their *ſource* be a

ſecret

ſecret even to myſelf, what can I poſſibly inform you of?

I find it impoſſible to follow your advice. No, my dear, no; I will not *ſound the depth* of my heart; I will not *dive* into that of M. de Germeuil: whither would the fruitleſs diſcovery of his *ſentiments*, or of *my own*, lead me? The time was, when I could entertain *hopes*; when *ſmiling proſpects* amuſed my vacant hours. The happy need not fear giving a looſe to their imagination; pleaſing objects meet their eyes; no cloud darkens the ground of their brilliant picture; but ſorrow throws a gloomy veil over all our ideas: poſſibly I might find new matter of affliction on venturing to make ſo imprudent a ſearch: does it become me to ſuffer my fancy to wander one ſingle moment and to dwell on theſe vain, theſe aſpiring illuſions?

Could you, my dear Hortenſia?—What a name do you give to the Marquis de Germeuil, *my lover*; he! *I ſhall regret my lover?* Ah! it is enough to regret a tender, a faithful friend.

Every thing conſpires to ſeparate us; ſoon we ſhall ſee each other no more. He is to accompany his mother to Granſon; at his return, I ſhall be with Madam de Moncenai; and thus I ſhall have ſacrificed the only pleaſure of my life to decency, to duty; it muſt be——

Cannot the conſciouſneſs of having done ſo, comfort and relieve the oppreſſion of my heart?—Sometimes I am inclined to inform Monſ. de Germeuil, that he will not find me any more at this place. But in confeſſing to him only ſome of the reaſons which determine me to quit my abode, while I am forced to be ſilent on the principal one, I ſhall be obliged to lay a greater ſtreſs upon the others. To enter on the humiliating detail of my ſituation; to expoſe my miſery, or at leaſt bring it back to his remembrance! what anſwer ſhall I then make to his juſt reproaches? He has tried every expedient to induce me to accept his offers, and to ſecure me an independent eſtabliſhment.—Oh! it is not, as he imagines it, a *cruel haughtineſs* which induces me to reject his preſents. I could wiſh to owe my ſettlement to Monſ. de Germeuil; I could be glad to call him the author of my happineſs! but the regard I owe my ſex, will not give me leave to accept it at his hands.

I could wiſh to forget what you have written to me. You have raiſed uneaſy reflections in my mind. I cannot help reading over again in ſpite of me, that ſtrange letter.——Oh! my Hortenſia, beware of giving me *any further information*. Give me leave to think, to believe, that there is no ſentiment more *warm*, more

tender,

tender, more *capable to engroſs a whole heart*, than the ſincere regard, which it ſhall ever be my delight to profeſs for you.

LETTER XIV.

I Have this moment received your obliging letter. My preſent diſpoſition of mind will not allow me to anſwer ſo many intereſting articles. That which concerns Madam de Moncenai and the Counteſs de Terville her mother, occaſions me an extreme regret. How good was it in you, my dear, to procure all theſe informations. Alas! your intelligence comes too late: I was introduced this morning, accepted, and *hired*, ſo that in ten days time your ſorrowful friend will be no longer her own miſtreſs.

No words can deſcribe the reluctance I felt in ſuffering myſelf to be preſented at Madam de Moncenai's. I thought I had been more humble, and more reſigned. How many cruel reflections ſucceſſively followed each other; what mortifying ideas made me caſt down my eyes during the queſtions of the Marchioneſs to Madam de Beaumont? To hear the humiliating conditions of my ſervitude propoſed; the

mention of wages—Is it then true, my Hortenſia?—But let us ſtifle theſe laſt remains of pride. O my dear, to be mingled and confounded with the daughters of low mechanics, brought up to get money by the employment of their time; to become their companion, and to hope for no pre-eminence over them but by my ſuperior ſkill and diligence at my work—Do not ſympathize with me in my ill-timed grief; let not the too viſible marks of my ſorrow on this paper, call forth your own tears; aſſiſt me to repreſs theſe emotions, doubtleſs very blameable: for, who am I? whence ariſes this pride within me, which all my efforts have not hitherto been able to ſurmount? I bluſh at my vanity, at my unreaſonableneſs. If the uncertainty of my condition were known, the meaneſt of theſe girls, whom I cannot bear to look on as my equal, might poſſibly diſdain the title of companion, which I now grudge her.

How ſoon ſhall I be forced to regret that fellowſhip in ſorrow ſo formed to alleviate it! what! Monſ. de Germeuil—But he is going; he leaves me; I ſhall perhaps never ſee him again! my heart is oppreſſed. I wiſh—But what wiſh am I allowed to form? Farewell, my dear, I cannot explain myſelf any further. The more I lay open to you my broken heart, the more I ſhall afflict yours.

LET-

LETTER XV.

I Haſten to write to you, to lay before you the perplexing ſituation of my mind, and to aſk your ſalutary counſels; but I know not whether the agitation of my thoughts, the inconceivable uneaſineſs of my ſoul, will allow me to inform you of the cauſe of thoſe conflicts whoſe violence I experience.

Oh my dear, what bright proſpects open before my eyes, what flattering aſſurances! what engaging offers! you are not miſtaken; the Marquis de Germeuil—But I am unable to proceed; I can hardly fetch my breath; my hand trembles. I cannot compoſe myſelf.

O my clear-ſighted friend, you told me true—I ſubmit my conduct to your better underſtanding; guide me in the moſt important affair of my life; determine my fate, that of the Marquis de Germeuil. His happineſs depends, he tells me, on my anſwer. —I dread—I heſitate—No, I dare not decide the fate of that *lovely* man, of that endearing friend. But muſt I call him by that name ſtill? No, I dare not take upon me to be the ſovereign diſpoſer of his happineſs.

For theſe two hours paſt I have been entirely loſt to myſelf. At ſix, I had given over all hopes of ever ſeeing the Marquis; I thought him gone. He had left me the evening before with ſo much concern! his eyes bathed in tears, his ſighs ſuppreſſed, and the tone of his voice ſo changed; all conſpired to perſuade me he had taken his laſt farewell; never, never ſhall I ſee him more. Sorrowful, dejected, incapable of any application, I abandoned myſelf to the moſt afflicting thoughts, when the door opened; my heart beat, I turned my head, I perceived the Marquis. His preſence at once ſurpriſed and overjoyed me: I roſe up in haſte; I ran to meet him; I cried out, is it you, is it really you?

Pleaſure was painted on his countenance. He repeatedly cried out; how pleaſing, how affecting is this reception! Oh! my charming couſin, how have I wiſhed to diſcover in your eyes the remains of their wonted vivacity!— But could you poſſibly think me gone? What! leave my deareſt friend without one farewell; without being ſure of her inclinations?

You cannot poſſibly conceive the ſtrange awkward ſituation of my mind. I muſt confeſs to you that this ſpeech, ſimple and natural as it may appear, threw me into the utmoſt con-

confuſion; I ſtood confounded, unable to utter a word.

Monſ. de Germeuil placed himſelf by me; he viewed me for a long time with a moſt intereſting look; and ſeizing one of my hands, preſſed it tenderly; and in a low but animated voice, I ſet out, my dear couſin, I leave you tomorrow—He ſtopped. Yes, I ſet off continued he, but ſhall I bear along with me the ſad reflection of leaving you alone, without help, without ſupport? His ſighs again ſtopped his voice: once, ſaid he, I thought myſelf a favoured friend. Am I then to live ever precluded from the rights attached to that dear title? Your obſtinate refuſal—Indeed you know not how much you afflict me!

He roſe, went towards the window; and came back to me; I am acquainted with all your ſchemes, ſaid he. Pauline has diſcovered them to me: if you do not wiſh to pierce my heart with a thouſand cruel pangs, you will give them over, you will place more confidence in me; you will acquieſce in the little plan which this honeſt girl, who is entirely attached to you and to your true intereſt, approves, and is to communicate to you. I would have interrupted him; he cried out with earneſtneſs, give me leave for once to expreſs my ſentiments with freedom:

freedom; I have long impoſed on myſelf a moſt rigorous ſilence; I reſpected your tears; I partook in your ſorrow; I have lamented in ſecret that noble but cruel pride which made you reject my offers, and prefer the moſt wretched reſources, a painful laborious employment, to the aſſiſtance of a friend; of a relation! and—a tender relation. For ſtill I look on you as attached to me by the ties of blood: theſe ties ſo dear I will ſtrengthen, by ſtill ſweeter and more laſting ones. O my lovely couſin! mark my ſecret ſentiments; hear my vows, my reſolution, my love, my paſſion—Bluſh not, Sophy, let no fear, no uneaſineſs trouble that delicate frame of ſoul, that for the world I would not alarm; ſuſpect not my purpoſes, nor doubt one moment, the purity of my affection: Madam d'Auterive deſigned you for me: ſhe had reſolved our union: Oh! her will is dear, is ſacred to me; I reſt my whole happineſs in obeying it; I atteſt her memory, I ſwear it to the heireſs of her virtues.

O Hortenſia, a rapid emotion unfelt before, poured into my heart pleaſing delight, tranſporting joy, and moſt delicious ſenſations! the remembrance of all my afflictions vaniſhed; the idea of my humiliation, of my miſery, diſappeared all on a ſudden: It looked as if I had

had recovered my former happy ſtate: tranſported beyond myſelf, I ſeized the hands of the Marquis, I preſſed them between mine; my ready lips were opening to all the effuſions of gratitude, friendſhip, eſteem, veneration. —Yes, my dear, that moment he filled me with veneration: but raiſing my down-caſt eyes on him, a ſecret ſhame withheld me; I could not bear the fire—of his—: forced to turn aſide my own, ſpeechleſs, confounded, I ſighed; a ſtrong palpitation made me fear to fall ſenſeleſs into his arms.

You are ſilent, my lovely Sophia, replied Monſ. de Germeuil, you caſt down your eyes, you will not ſuffer me to read your ſoul! Very well; I do not inſiſt on a formal conſent, it would be too much for the delicacy of my modeſt friend; but permit me to interpret that ſweet confuſion in my favour; do not diſappoint the hopes it gives me; allow me to indulge the flattering idea: I ſhall go away ſatisfied; I will wait the confirmation of your goodneſs and condeſcenſion, at Granſon; you know my ſincerity; I will not pour forth uſeleſs proteſtations, and vain oaths; I am a ſtranger to the language of ſeduction. I love, I adore you; I always loved you. If ſome qualities diſtinguiſh me from the common run of men;

if

if I have not the vices too juſtly imputed to youth; if I have fled thoſe vile amuſements, whoſe charms are ſo powerful on that age, I owe the rectitude of my morals, to the ardour of pleaſing you, to the deſire of deſerving you, to the hope of obtaining you: yes, ever ſince my childhood, Sophia is the wife choſen by my heart; Oh! if her's partake of my tenderneſs; if in labouring for my own felicity, I can promiſe myſelf to ſecure her's, I ſee nothing in the univerſe capable of ſtopping me in my projects, and of oppoſing my forming thoſe ties which I burn to enter into.

Nothing, cried I: what, will Madam de Germeuil conſent to beſtow the name of your wife on an unhappy ſtranger, on the object of her diſdain, her hatred, and her contempt? Can you forget, ſir, your birth, and the uncertainty of my condition! Is the woman ſo much as known whom you can venture to chuſe for your companion? So many prejudices to be overcome, ſo many obſtacles to ſurmount—— I have foreſeen every thing, conſidered every thing, replied he with warmth; do not debaſe yourſelf in your own eſteem by the notion of an imaginary inequality between us: my advantages are but ſmall, compared with the gifts you hold from nature. If my intrea-

ties,

ties, if the moſt preſſing inſtances cannot determine my mother to prefer my happineſs to the ambitious views which have made her ſeek an alliance with Mademoiſelle de Sauve, I will ſacrifice the hopes of her fortune without regret; I will undergo the puniſhment of a voluntary fault: my mother may deprive me of her fortune, but the poſſeſſion of what alone is dear to me will indemnify me for the loſs. In ſix months I ſhall be maſter of a pretty conſiderable inheritance, and at liberty to enter into engagements beyond the controul of authority; then will I fly to lay my heart and fortune at your feet. Happy, a thouſand times happy, if my dear Sophia vouchſafe to ſecond my deſires, and to compleat my hopes, by the gift of that hand on which I ſwear never to accept any other. I ſtrove to withdraw my hand; I would have ſpoken: not a ſingle objection, ſaid he, in the moſt paſſionate accent, except it ariſe from your indifference, from an invincible averſion to me. Sophia, my dear Sophia! do you then hate me? I was dumb, for how could I poſſibly anſwer that queſtion?

He looked on me with tenderneſs; he held my hands; he kiſſed them; I felt them wet with his tears, nor was I able to ſuppreſs my own. I leave you, O my Sophia, he repeated, I am going—I leave you to your reflections,

flections, continued he; call to mind your former goodneſs. With what impatience ſhall I expect a line from your hand. Pauline will ſpeak to you. Lend an obliging attention to that girl; ſhe will ſpeak to you about me, my deſigns, the plan neceſſary for your tranquillity, and for my repoſe. Farewell, farewell, my charming couſin. After pronouncing theſe words, he roſe up haſtily, and hiding his face, he quitted my room with precipitation.

I remained a long time in the place where he had juſt left me, my eyes fixed on the door, without motion, and almoſt without breath. An extreme effuſion of tenderneſs followed this ſuſpenſion, as it were, of all my faculties, till at length tears flowing, even with pleaſure, brought me to myſelf: I repeated to myſelf all the expreſſions of Monſ. de Germeuil; while gay illuſions, ſmiling images, accompanied my ſenſe of gratitude. *Complete the wiſhes* of Monſ. de Germeuil? I complete his wiſhes! can I then beſtow on him *the only poſſeſſion he values?* I make him happy?—Oh! anſwer me quickly, my dear Hortenſia, anſwer me in all the ſincerity of your heart: what would you do? I know what I would wiſh to do myſelf, but know not what I ought to wiſh for.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

HOW melancholy my ſolitude is become to me, my dear friend, what ſullen ſilence reigns around me, how long the hours ſeem! alas! why ſhould I wiſh them to paſs quicker away? They will neither bring me pleaſure nor comfort.

I this morning received a very tender note from Monſ. de Germeuil: he bids me farewell; and begs, preſſes, nay conjures me to permit Pauline to execute the orders he has given her. With what goodneſs does he enter into the moſt minute particulars; you may judge of it by the following articles.

" Air and exerciſe appear to me abſolutely " neceſſary, in order to remove the extreme " weakneſs of Mademoiſelle de Valiere; you " will engage her to retire to the houſe I have " hired in her name. You know the Bailiff; " he has received my orders, and you are " acquainted with my intentions".

" You will endeavour to prevail with Ma- " demoiſelle de Valiere to reſume her uſual " amuſements. She will find in the pavilion " next the river, her pencils, drawings, cray- " ons, harpſichord and lute, her muſic and

" her

" her two caſes of books: I had them bought
" at my aunt's ſale, in order to reſtore them to
" her, when in a condition to take them home".

" Your niece is to wait on her as formerly.
" In the mean time the Bailiff and his wife will
" undertake the reſt of the buſineſs till my
" return".

" If Mademoiſelle de Valiere diſcover any
" reluctance to be directed by my advice; if
" her heart refuſe its conſent to the ardent
" wiſhes of mine; if ſhe cannot reliſh a propoſal
" formed for our common happineſs; if her in-
" difference make her ſeparate her intereſt from
" mine; if ſhe will not conſent to inhabit a
" place where every object muſt trace out my
" care and tenderneſs; obtain of her at leaſt that
" ſhe deprive me not of the only comfort capa-
" ble of ſoftening her refuſal. This would be
" a cruelty which I cannot allow myſelf to ſuſ-
" pect in a ſoul ſo noble, ſo generous as her's".

" Madam d'Auterive intended to ſecure to
" Mademoiſelle de Valiere a part of her for-
" tune; you have given me proofs of it. What
" is to devolve to me one day, as my ſhare of
" her ſucceſſion is what I think I cannot in
" juſtice appropriate to myſelf. I ſhall therefore
" accept it as a truſt; it will paſs through my
" hands, only to return to its original deſtination.

" I

" I beſeech Mademoiſelle de Valiere would " pleaſe to accept of the pocket book * which " accompanies my letter. I conjure her to keep " it as a ſmall advance of a ſum which belongs " to her. I did not dare to preſent it to her " myſelf. You know how cruelly her obſtinate " and continual refuſal has pierced my heart. " When my ſentiments, and my intentions are " once known to her, I ſhould look on the " leaſt mark of miſtruſt as an aggravating " circumſtance of her contempt, which would " drive me to deſpair.

" Lay out all your zeal to ſerve me in an " occaſion where your ſucceſs will entitle you " to every mark of my gratitude. Put Ma- " moiſelle de Valiere in mind that I expect " to hear from her, and that with the utmoſt " impatience. Urge her to grant me this fa- " vour, ſo paſſionately deſired, &c. &c."

Write to him, my dear! O my God! what ſhall I ſay to him? *If her heart refuſe its conſent to the ardent wiſhes of mine*—Can he think, can he believe?-Why was I not born in the higheſt rank; why do I not poſſeſs all the treaſures of the earth! this hand which he vouchſafes to aſk, which he vouchſafes to deſire—Generous Germeuil! let it not once enter thy thoughts that a poor friendleſs girl, loſes herſelf

* In the French idiom, implies its contents, as India bonds, the notes of public notaries, &c.

herſelf in theſe vain wiſhes; no, ſhe is not deſtined to *make thee happy*: drive away the remembrance of the unfortunate creature, whom thou honoureſt with ſo tender a ſentiment. Fate, by humbling her, hath torn from her every hope of being thine.

But I cannot write; I find myſelf born away by the impulſe of my ſoul; I muſt give vent to my tears, and abandon myſelf to my melancholy thoughts; they redouble every moment; become more and more bitter: pity me, I am truly miſerable, a thouſand times more miſerable than I thought I could be.

LETTER XVII.

FAR from anſwering my expectation, your letter ſurprizes, troubles, vexes me. I was in hopes the conformity of our principles would have inſpired you with counſels capable of confirming me in a reſolution already formed: whence comes it, whence comes it, my dear, we do not think alike? *Friendſhip ſuggeſts that advice.* I believe it. But then that friendſhip may prepoſſeſs you, may deceive you, and I am *ſure* my reaſon does not miſlead me.

Have you maturely examined the ſituation of Monſ. de Germeuil and mine. You conſider

ſider me alone; you ſee my intereſt, but are blind to his; you can eaſily remove all thoſe *difficulties* which you *apprehend I ſhall look on as inſurmountable obſtacles.*

I have nothing to object to your praiſes of the Marquis, I do juſtice to his character; I am well acquainted with the nobleneſs of his heart. The ſenſibility of his nature, his goodneſs, his candor endeared him to me, from the firſt moment that my reaſon taught me to diſcern his amiable qualities. I have no ſort of doubt *as to the ſincerity of his attachment, or the purity of his intentions*; but will friendſhip, gratitude, duty, honour, allow me to *accept of his hand? I ſhould make him happy.* You think I ſhould. For one moment I had the ſame ſeducing idea myſelf; but to *comply with his requeſt*; *to compleat his wiſhes*, would be to deliver him over to an eternal repentance for having entertained thoſe wiſhes ſo contrary to his true happineſs.

What! my dear Hortenſia, ſhall I reward ſo unbounded an affection with an improper compliance. Shall I conſent to blaſt the hopes of Monſ. de Germeuil? What I? Shall I occaſion the ſacrifice of the greateſt part of his fortune? Shall I expoſe him to the anger, the fury, the vengeance of that irritated mother? Shall I deprive him of the eſteem of his friends,

and

and the good-will of his relations? Shall I blend his fortune with that of an unhappy woman, and carry into his houſe that miſery which purſues me? Shall the Marquis de Germeuil be wanting in his duty to himſelf; commit *a voluntary fault*, and *bear its puniſhment!*—O let him preſerve his numberleſs advantages; may they form the durable felicity of his life; may he be loved, cheriſhed, revered! May the ſad Sophia never caſt a blemiſh on his glory, nor ſtop his career to thoſe dignities which his rank and fortune promiſe him. You ſay he will *forget me*; why, if he does, my dear, I ſhall perhaps weep in ſecret; but then I can ſay to myſelf, in all the ſweet ſatisfaction of a heart free from remorſe, that amiable man, that generous friend, has received at my hands the reward due to his noble diſintereſtedneſs.

We ought not to ſacrifice ourſelves to conſiderations which may prove vain. I believe my own to be juſt. I will ſay no more; I look on it as an indiſpenſable duty to refuſe the offers of Monſ. de Germeuil. *It is not reaſonable to reject the favours of fortune.* I allow it: other circumſtances might render me more complying with your advice, and give me leſs reluctance to contract ſuch great obligations.

If Monſ. de Germeuil were arrived at that time of life when experience, knowledge of the

the world, and of one's ſelf, generally determine our way of thinking; if he were maſter of his actions; if his principles, confirmed and known, could give his conduct the appearance of a reflected choice, and of a preference ſhewn to thoſe eſtimable qualities, which in the eyes of a diſcerning world, will always carry it againſt fortune, birth, and every other reputed advantage, I ſhould not heſitate a moment; I would accept the honour he condeſcends to offer me; my whole life ſhould be ſpent in the demonſtration of my gratitude; in juſtifying his goodneſs to me, by my conduct, by my aſſiduity, and by a continual attention to pleaſe and to oblige him.

But the Marquis is young: were I to conſent to this unequal union, we ſhould both be condemned for our imprudence, without a hearing by that prejudice ſo common againſt thoſe at our time of life. Far from ennobling the object of his love, Monſ. de Germeuil would expoſe her to the moſt rigid, perhaps the moſt cruel cenſure: he would be thought indiſcreet I ſhould be accuſed me of intereſted views; while he would be looked on as a weak ſeduced young man: and indeed, why ſhould they think otherwiſe? In a caſe where two perſons concur in breaking through the laws of ſociety, he who

who derives the moſt advantage from their common fault, muſt naturally incur the greateſt ſhare of blame: would you have your friend ſuſpected of double-dealing and artifice—would you wiſh Madam de Germeuil ſhould reproach her, and with reaſon, with an *haughty ingratitude?*

It is in conſequence of the deepeſt reflection, and the moſt painful conflict, that I am come to a firm reſolution never to give my hand to Monſ. de Germeuil, and to deſtroy all his hopes. It is my duty, I am determined on it, but I am at a loſs how to write to him. How ſhall I ſay to him, *forget her who is for ever bound to you by every tie of gratitude?* I begin, I blot out; my heart relents in the very firſt lines; tears ſtop my hand; when a little calmed, I reſume my pen, but cannot pleaſe myſelf with any expreſſions. That I ſhould be forced to afflict him! the amiable Germeuil! *Not a ſingle objection*, ſaid he, *except it ariſe from an invincible averſion to me*——O God! what will he think? —Farewell, my dear Hortenſia; may you never feel the uneaſineſs which I do.

One in the Morning.

Before I ſeal my letter, I muſt ſubjoin a copy of what I have written to Monſ. de Germeuil. And yet I know not whether I ſhall have

have reſolution enough to ſend it; it will appear very diſobliging, and poſſibly cruel! He will be angry with me, and how ſhall I bear that thought? —— but it muſt be. Will not the conſciouſneſs of having done my duty leſſen the grief which overwhelms me?

Sophia de Valiere,

To Monſ. de Germeuil.

" I Am extremely unhappy, Sir, not to be
" able to give you thoſe proofs I could
" wiſh of my gratitude. The honour you
" are pleaſed to intend an unfortunate young
" creature, as it muſt ever be preſent to
" my memory, ſo will it always be my great-
" eſt comfort under my afflictions; will en-
" gage me to watch over my conduct, to
" approve it ſuch as that you need not bluſh
" in ſecret at the generous reſolution you
" expreſſed to make me your wife.

" In happier times, the nephew of Ma-
" dam d'Auterive, would have found in me
" an acquieſcence capable of flattering, of
" accompliſhing all his wiſhes; but in that
" low ſtate to which I am reduced, to avail
" myſelf of your kindneſs, would be to abuſe
" it, to betray you, to juſtify the hatred of
" your relations, and to expoſe myſelf to
" the indignation of all thoſe who love
" you. By placing me in this humble con-
" dition, fate ſeems to trace out to me the
" path where I am to walk; I cannot leave
" it without loſing myſelf. It becomes you,
" Sir, to travel in a different road.

" To enter into no other engagements; to
" to live ſolitary and unknown; to keep alive
" the remembrance of your kind intentions;
" to pray for your happineſs; theſe, Sir,
" are the only marks of eſteem, attachment
" and gratitude, I am at liberty to ſhew
" you.

" Forced to beg of you never to ſee me
" more, and to deſire to be forgotten by
" you, may I ſtill preſume to aſſure you of
" my ſincere, my conſtant, my eternal re-
" gard?

" gard? Oh! be not angry with me, nor
" blame a young woman who is already too,
" too miſerable; believe me, Sir, had it not
" been for the change in my ſituation;
" you would never have had cauſe to re-
" proach me with that of my heart."

LETTER XVIII.

YOU *diſpleaſe*, you *make me angry*, my dear Hortenſia! Oh! fear it not, your remonſtrances *do not hurt me*, but the reproaches which follow them affect me ſenſibly. Several expreſſions in your letter would throw me into the bitterneſs of repentance, if I were not ſure I had conducted myſelf by principles never made to inſpire it.

I never thought *my underſtanding ſuperior to yours*, or that I was *better acquainted with my duty* than Monſ. de Germeuil; I never *pretended to point out his to him*; but flattering myſelf I was leſs partial, I thought myſelf in a better condition to form a right judgment of his ſituation, and of my own, with the future conſequences to us both with which ſo inconſiderate a ſtep was likely to be attended.

You tell me that the laws of the province * in which his eſtate lies, put him

* Normandy.

in

in poſſeſſion at one and twenty, of that part of his fortune; but can they exempt him from that reſpect which he owes to himſelf? Do they allow him to enter into engagements *beyond the control of authority?* Can they ſhelter him from the juſt indignation of Madam de Germeuil? As ſhe may diſinherit him at pleaſure, do you not imagine ſhe will puniſh him to the utmoſt extent of her power?

We pardon, you ſay, *all the faults which love makes us commit.* With my little experience, I may venture to aſſure you of the falſehood of that maxim, at leaſt with regard to women. If the extreme violence of that paſſion is admitted as an excuſe for a ſex who are encouraged by their education and natural boldneſs never to curb their paſſions, and to ſacrifice every thing to the pleaſure of indulging them; modeſty, and that moderation, the ordinary portion of ours, preclude us from all claim to the like indulgence; it is an unequal conflict, my dear, where conqueſt is made the indiſpenſable duty of the more timid and weak.

I cannot anſwer your queſtion; I have never opened the pocket-book of Monſ. de Germeuil; it is ſtill in the hands of Pauline; ſhe waits for his orders to tranſmit it him, and has promiſed to deliver my anſwer on that article.

You reproach me with *neglecting my affairs:* Since the death of my dear, my honoured Protectreſs, it has been my moſt ſerious occupation to conſult my *true intereſt.* Miſtreſs of my own conduct, and of my will, in ſpite of my misfortune, I have not renounced the thoughts of conciliating the affection of all about me, and of diſtinguiſhing myſelf, as far as I am able, in this ſtate of dereliction and poverty. A fantaſtic idea, which my reaſon re jects, but my heart adopts, would perſuade me not to look on myſelf as a friendleſs girl, whoſe conduct is a thing indifferent to every body; but as a young perſon removed for a time from her family, whom her relations have placed in the arms of poverty, as in a ſtate of probation. Influenced by this thought, I will hold myſelf always in readineſs to

give

give an exact account of my actions, and in every circumſtance of my life, before I yield to the ſuggeſtions of my heart; I will ask myſelf *what anſwer ſhould I make were I to be aſked the motives which determined me?*

I will ſubmit to your own reflections, my dear, this *diſobliging refuſal to lie under any obligations to my moſt tender friend.* Can I, with decency, accept the ſervices of Monſ. de Germeuil? live under the protection of ſo young a man? owe my dependance to him? inhabit a ſpacious and pleaſant country ſeat, where *every object would trace out his care and tenderneſs?* How could I avoid his company? With what right could I ſhut the door of his own houſe againſt him? Would it not be highly imprudent to ſuperadd the ſenſe of a juſt gratitude to that lively and endearing friendſhip which you yourſelf call *dangerous?* He will think me *inſenſible*; he will ceaſe *to love me*; *to think of me.* And pray, who revealed to you this afflicting truth? Is it by preferring his intereſt to my own happineſs, that I have deſerved his indifference?—What, ſhall that

friendſhip congenial with us both lie extinguiſhed in his heart? Oh, no, it will live in his as in mine for ever; he will never forget me:—you forewarn me that he will forget me; you ſeem, my dear, to lay a great ſtreſs on this.—Yes, my letter is gone; for the future direct yours to the Hotel de Terville; Madam de Moncenai lodges at her mother's.

LET-

LETTER XIX.

YOU are not indulgent enough to a heart *whoſe ſecret motions you think you know.* When I become better *acquainted* with my own *real inclination*, I ſhall *repent the ſacrifice I have made*; it ſhall prove the ſource of *eternal bitterneſs*; I ſhall reproach myſelf *every day of my life* ſhall having *blaſted my own hopes, and filled with grief the heart of a generous man.*

With *grief!* how the cruel word pierces me to the heart! But why, my dear Hortenſia, why, tell me?— why do you ſtrive? —do not endeavour to perſuade me.—— Oh! never preſent to my idea the ſad image of Monſ. de Germeuil, *afflicted, deeply afflicted!* rather repeat to me, he will *forget you*, he will not *think of you*; I prefer, without heſitation, the mortifying certainty of being baniſhed from his remembrance to the afflicting thought *of having filled his heart with grief.*

Let us baniſh, for the future, a ſubject which affects us in ſo different a manner; I cannot think of Monſ. de Germeuil; of his proffers, and of my misfortune, without feeling myſelf oppreſſed; without ſhedding tears: and I am no longer at liberty to allow my heart this unavailing comfort.

I have been theſe five days at the Hotel de Terville: in the morning I wait on the young Marchioneſs; I ſit down to work with her, and often at the ſame frame; all this while I am obliged to ſtifle my ſighs, and conceal my deep ſadneſs. After dinner, I am employed in a long gallery in ſuperintending the work of a number of young girls, very aukward in mixing their ſhades. Madam de Moncenai's maids are buſied here in winding the ſilks, in ſharing among them the bobbins of worſted, and in diſtributing the gold ſpangles to thoſe who are to work them up. A noiſy mirth reigns every where; ſome ſing, others laugh: the ſmall time I am obliged to ſpend there, appears extremely long and diſagreeable.

You

You are in hopes Madam de Moncenai will *diſtinguiſh me by her particular notice of me*; no ſuch thing; her coldneſs and indifference render her incapable of ſuch *condeſcenſion* as you mention. It is not her's, but Madam la Contteſſe de Terville's good graces that muſt be cultivated. This laſt lady is ſtill in the country, and no body here ſeems to deſire her return.

But I am in haſte as I find I am called down: I might have had a letter from Monſ. de Germeuil yeſterday; I know not whether I wiſhed it, or feared it, but my heart beat within me all day long. Is it becauſe he may write no more? What never!—Oh, Hortenſia, do you think that he will never write to me? I wiſh——Oh! I know not what I wiſh; all my ideas claſh and deſtroy each other; I cannot fix them. Farewell, my dear, continue to love me.

LET-

LETTER XX.

I Sincerely congratulate you on the advantage you have lately obtained. I look on it as an happy omen of your gaining your law-ſuit. That proviſion once granted, will enable you to reimburſe your couſin all ſhe has advanced for you. I can eaſily conceive the kind of *relief* you ſpeak of: You are in the right, there is perhaps ſome *cunning* in lending with an ill grace. We may poſſibly weaken the ſenſe of gratitude in our debtors, but then we make them extremely eager to get out of our debt.

Can you aſk me if I am *ſatisfied* with the choice *I have fixed on?* You, whoſe ſoul is ſo ſenſible, ſo delicate, were you not apprehenſive, my dear, of teazing me by ſuch a queſtion? Does it not carry the mark of a reproach? Formerly you never uſed to accuſe me of *obſtinacy*. Can we properly be ſaid to chooſe, when neceſſity impoſes that *choice*; when it leaves us but one path to proceed in?

So

So near, and yet ſo far removed from my firſt condition, how ſhould I be *ſatisfied?* Every thing that preſents itſelf to my eyes, recalls the idea of Madam d'Auterive's houſe: I ſpend the day in a magnificent apartment; pomp, ſplendor and riches, ſtill ſhine around me; my eyes ſtill view the ſame objects, but theſe no longer make the ſame impreſſion: the little ſatisfaction they give me is a ſufficient leſſon how different the property in any thing is from the mere enjoyment.

Pleaſures, you tell me, *will ſoon reign at Granſon, nothing but feſtivity:* Madam de Sauve is to be of the party: your couſin *foreſees an approaching alliance between the two families:* And why, my dear, why does this projected alliance *diſturb you ſo much?* why occaſion ſo *much uneaſineſs?* Mademoiſelle de Sauve is well born; ſhe is rich: if heaven have deſtined her to form the happineſs of Monſ. de Germeuil, ſhe ſhall have my moſt ardent prayers; yes, in the ſecret of my heart, I ſhall love, I ſhall cheriſh the woman who can make him happy.

No,

No, indeed, he has not written to me. Does not his conduct in this ſeem ſingular, and even capricious? My refuſal may have provoked him, I confeſs; but though I ſhould have angered him, ſhould he not have written to me! Can friendſhip be extinguiſhed in an inſtant? Do there remain no traces of it? mine ſhall be more laſting. Certain to have deſerved the eſteem of Monſ. de Germeuil, I did hope to obtain it: I flattered myſelf I ſhould preſerve it; receive teſtimonies of it, not very frequent, indeed, but tender comforting ones; they would have ſweetened all the troubles of my life! His neglect, his coldneſs, even his forgetfulneſs, ſhall never deſtroy my firſt ſentiments; I ſhall always remember that the nephew of Madam d'Auterive did not forſake me in my misfortune; that he would have altered my ſituation, and have made me happy! Gratitude ſhall engrave on the bottom of my heart his good intentions, *tranſitory*, indeed, but honourable,—worthy the candor and generoſity of his ſoul.

I have already told it you; I ſhould loſe my labour in endeavouring to make a friend

of

of Madam de Moncenai; I believe her neither capable of love nor hatred. It is not poſſible to be prettier, and at the ſame time leſs amiable, than this lady. The care of her perſon is her ſole occupation; ſhe is ſo taken up with herſelf; ſo little capable of intereſting herſelf for others; ſo tireſome with her perpetual repetitions of the trifling events which concern her only; ſo fretful at the leaſt alteration in her health; talks ſo much, and enters into ſo minute a detail of it; her accounts are ſo tedious, ſo diſguſting, that ſhe tires out her very women: cold and inſipid, her beautiful and regular features ſhew no marks of the leaſt emotion; ſhe will be to-day what ſhe was yeſterday; and to-morrow will find her in the ſame diſpoſition. Amidſt the grand circle ſhe lives in, ſhe makes no diſtinction of perſons; the commerce of the world, and faſhion, guide her in every every thing, and I doubt whether ſhe ever made one ſingle reflection on the little *devoirs* of ſociety, though ſhe obſerves them all very punctually.

The abſence of her huſband, now in Provence, whither he is gone to take poſſeſſion of

of a conſiderable inheritance, ſubjects her conduct to the authority of the Counteſs de Terville. Happily for the young Marchioneſs it is nearly the ſame thing to follow her own inclinations, or to be guided by thoſe of other people.

Farewell, my dear, Hortenſia, may you experience, in the ſequel of your affairs, the ſame good fortune you met with laſt tueſday.

LETTER XXI.

WHEN the mind is reſtleſs and diſſatisfied, it is ſome kind of amuſement, you ſay, to form diſtant wiſhes, to direct all our ideas to one object, to divert the hours of our retirement with the illuſions of a deep, nay, even pleaſing, melancholy. Indeed, my dear, for ſome time paſt you have found out *amuſements* of a very extraordinary nature; but I will not attempt to penetrate into the ſecrets of your heart: when ever you pleaſe, I ſhall comprehend this myſterious language, and then the veil under which you conceal your ſentiments, will be removed.

If it is an *amuſement* to *form diſtant wiſhes*, it is not always an advantage to ſee them accompliſhed. The inſtant that brings on the accompliſhment of our deſires, often deſtroys a flattering expectation, robs us of a pleaſing hope, and delivers us over to that anxiety which a ſtate of doubt and uncertainty kept at a diſtance.

I muſt

I muſt confeſs, I was paſſionately deſirous to receive a letter from Monſ. de Germeuil: I will confeſs more; I imagined I had a right to the gratitude of a friend, whoſe proffers I rejected, from ſentiments, rather tender than generous. The care of his happineſs alone intereſted me; his fortune, his duty, the fear of making him loſe the ſmalleſt advantages he enjoyed, were the object of my moſt ſerious reflections. Theſe alone determined my conduct, and if I did ſet before your eyes and my own, all the inconveniencies that might affect myſelf; awaken every apprehenſion of the future, and open to my view all the ſad conſequences of my compliance, thoſe were only arts to confirm and ſtrengthen me in my reſolution of parting for ever with thoſe ideas of felicity, whoſe too ſeducing image returned every inſtant to my troubled thoughts.

I have received the anſwer expected with ſo much emotion and impatience; I could wiſh; yes, I could wiſh it were ſtill the object of my hope—of my deſire: or rather, I wiſh I had never ſeen Monſ. de Germeuil

meuil again, never admitted his viſits, never written to him.

And why am I not at leaſt free, in my preſent diſagreeable ſituation? why am I not permitted to think, to act, without being expoſed to complaints, rather too ſevere; to unjuſt reproaches? Who has ſubjected my conduct to Monſ. de Germeuil? What right has he to blame me? My engaging with Madam de Moncenai *offends* him; he is *hurt* by this ſtep; he preſumes to accuſe me of *obſtinacy*, of *miſtruſt*, and almoſt of ingratitude. How angry I am with him! Oh! muſt Monſ. de Germeuil be taught how guarded we ſhould be, when we ſpeak to the unhappy, whoſe ſorrow and dejection, is apt to diſpoſe the heart to interpret into an unkind and bitter ſenſe, every expreſſion that does not breathe the greateſt gentleneſs and affection.

You involve me, he ſays, *in that contempt you juſtly entertained of the relations of Madam d'Auterive?* Is it poſſible he can think ſo? *I diſdain his aſſiduity. I confound him with*

thoſe

thoſe who deſerve my hatred; my ſentiments appear tender, my *reſolutions are cruel. Can the affecting promiſe of eternal friendſhip, agree* with *a deſire to be forgotten,* with *a requeſt never to ſee me any more,* and with *the inhuman refuſal Pauline has juſt informed him of?* He asks me *what prayers I can preſume to put up for him, whilſt I take a pleaſure in deſtroying all his hopes of happineſs, and in rendering him the moſt unfortunate of men?*

Is this reproach to be borne? Oh, my Hortenſia, is this love? Is this the ſentiment which you think my heart *too ſuſceptible* of? It is a comfort to me to learn to diſtinguiſh its effects; to aſſure myſelf that a paſſion ſo undiſcerning, ſo unreaſonable, has not found admittance into my heart. And is it not this love which ſhuts the eyes of Monſ. de Germeuil to his own intereſt; it conceals from him the force and ſincerity of an affection capable of ſacrificing every thing.——I am vexed, I am mortified; were I to tell you all, you would partake in my anger. I knew he was warm, but never ſuſpected him capable of giving way

way to this kind of paſſion.—He thinks I deſpiſe him, that I hate him!—Oh the ungrateful——! I will think no more of him. I will never write to him, no never.

Farewell, my dear, my mind is not calm enough to enter into the particulars you deſire of me. I am far from happy here: but in what place can I poſſibly be ſo?

LETTER XXII.

OH my dear, at what a time did I complain of Monſ. de Germeuil! Alas, thoſe angry expreſſions, I was offended with, were the effect of a dangerous delirium: the moment he was writing to me, he was at the point of death. Oh Hortenſia; the very thoughts of it ſhock me. —Oh my God! to have loſt him, loſt him for ever!—What, then would nothing have remained of the moſt perfect of human beings, but a ſad, and melancholy remembrance. But he is better, he is well; he will live; heaven vouchſafes to reſtore him to the prayers of ſo many hearts intereſted in his preſervation.

Greatly vexed at his departure, and much indiſpoſed on the road, he arrived at laſt at Granſon, in a burning fever. Soon did that terrible diſtemper, whoſe very name turns you pale, diſcover itſelf, accompanied with every ſymptom which indicates its malig-

malignity, and threatens death. The cries of lamentation filled the caſtle where ſo many diverſions were preparing. All thoſe trifling friends, whom the hopes of pleaſure had drawn together, quickly diſperſed. None remained but the Counteſs, who overcame her natural horror of this contagious diſtemper. Proſtrate near the bed of the beloved patient, her eyes were bathed in tears, and her hands lifted up, imploring the aſſiſtance of heaven.—Affectionate mother! her fears, her love, her aſſiduity, her tears revive in me the ſenſe of my former friendſhip; Oh, I ſhall love Madam de Germeuil? May the joy ſhe has lately felt never be interrupted by the like apprehenſions.

One of the Counteſs's ſervants, who returned yeſterday to Paris, with one of the Phyſicians, called to the aſſiſtance of Monſ. de Germeuil, gave Pauline a particular account of this event. This pernicious diſtemper has left no marks on the features of the Marquis, but his weakneſs and redneſs will detain him ſtill a conſiderable time in the country.

I cannot reflect, without the greateſt horror, on the danger which threatened the life of the Marquis de Germeuil. What! my dear, had they come and told me *he is dead*; he who partook in all the pleaſures of my happy childhood; the generous man, whoſe friendſhip was never leſſened by my fall, would have lived only in a broken heart.—Alas! we ſuffer with impatience the misfortunes that beſet us; we weep, we lament, we think the evil inſupportable, and look on it as the greateſt imaginable; and yet it is but too true that the greateſt grief in our preſent apprehenſion may be ſucceeded by a ſtill greater.

Forgive me, my dear, if in appearing entirely taken up with myſelf, and my own concerns, I incur the ſuſpicion of neglecting to intereſt myſelf in yours. They are not the leſs preſent to my thoughts, you cannot poſſibly doubt of it. *They teaze you*; pray who? I am ſorry to ſee you *fatigued, tormented*, with all theſe ſolicitations, which you are obliged *to continue*. Do not abandon yourſelf to this kind of deſpondency:

patience

patience is not one of the brilliant virtues; but my daily experience proves to me, that it is the only uſeful one to him who is poſſeſſed of it. How ſhall I adviſe you in regard to the projects of your relation? A man capable of chooſing you without waiting the deciſion of your law-ſuit, deſerves at leaſt the eſteem of my dear friend. This diſintereſtedneſs manifeſts a noble heart, and yet his aſſiduity ſeems troubleſome to you. Can it be that the addreſſes of Monſ. d'Arclai, are *diſagreeable* to you? And why ſhould they make you uneaſy? You are independent, and no body has a right to controul you.

Your couſin is become leſs *ſevere*: ſhe treats you with greater *diſtinction*. Well, my dear, make the moſt of this agreeable change: without examining the motive of her aſſiduities which you term *almoſt obliging*, turn her good humour to your own account, and endeavour to keep it up by your complaiſance. Farewell, my good friend.

LETTER XXIII.

YOU have reaſon to complain of my ſilence; but then you ought not to be *angry* with me, my dear. It is true, I have not written to you theſe two poſts. Weak, ill, vexed, not caring to interrupt my work, the fatigue of the day made me huſband the hours of the night; made me poſtpone every occupation capable of driving away ſleep from my heavy eyes. My health grows better, but my heart is grieved, and my mind gives way to new vexations.

I have received two letters from Monſ. de Germeuil; they have ſenſibly affected me. He aſks my *pardon* for having *preſumed to write to me* at a time *when he was not himſelf*; *he cannot recollect the expreſſions fallen from his pen in the height of his fever*; *I return him no anſwer! has he been ſo unfortunate as to offend me? he trembles at the very idea of having been guilty.* He *is ſo if he has diſpleaſed me*; he is *too ſeverely puniſhed by this long, this alarming ſilence!* no peeviſh, no angry

angry expreſſions, but the ſweeteſt, kindeſt reproaches; complaints ſo tender, prayers ſo ſubmiſſive, ſo warm; a will ſo determined to perſiſt in its purpoſes; ſo much zeal in combating, in overthrowing my *frivolous objections*. *Fortune, titles, grandeur*, have no charms for him: *May I loſe all, and gain Sophia, and then this world can offer me nothing worthy to excite my regret.*

Oh! Hortenſia, how defend myſelf againſt ſo warm a paſſion? he *will not believe me indifferent to the happineſs of a man* to whom *I vow an eternal friendſhip*; he challenges *all thoſe titles* that I ſhould have *honoured* him with during the life of Madam d'Auterive.

Into what a perplexity do my own expreſſions throw me! What can I ſay to him? He hurries, he afflicts me. I know not what ſecret power aſſiſted me to bear up againſt his injuſtice; I am ſure I find myſelf very weak againſt his entreaties. — Oh! why ſhould he love me? by what fatality do the joy, the felicity of Monſ. de Germeuil depend on an unfortunate girl? Alas! I

dare not conſider his love as a good; it might make ſome other ſo happy! What woman would not be overjoyed to reign over a heart ſo tender, ſo delicate. — Good God! what ſhall I do, tell me then, my dear, what would you do?

To my preſent ſtate of uncertainty, uneaſineſs, and perplexity, is ſuperadded the apprehenſion of being very ſoon under the neceſſity of ſeeking ſome other retreat. Madam de Terville, who arrived twelve days ſince, has already convinced me, that her character had been but too faithfully drawn to you. Her figure is diſagreeable, her air vulgar; ſhe ſpeaks loud, has an imperious tone, with the city manner; is of a ſuſpicious temper, and very ſour humour. It was with a kind of affected ſurpriſe, very diſobliging, and after ſeveral uſeleſs and ill-natured queſtions, that ſhe gave me leave to continue my uſual cuſtom of retiring to my room during meals. I had the mortification to hear her find fault with Madam de Moncenai, blame her *ridiculous condeſcenſion*, and repeat ten times over, *What, Madam*

Madam de Beaumont's niece not eat in the ſervants hall! For what reaſon, I beſeech you?

And yet, my youth, and perhaps other conſiderations, ought not to render this *condeſcenſion* ſo ſurpriſing in the eyes of a lady who is perpetually boaſting the regularity of her morals, and giving her own example as a pattern for the whole family.

From the moment ſhe comes into the apartment of Madam de Moncenai, I have the misfortune to fix her attention; ſhe puts me out of countenance with her looks; ſhe humbles me by her expreſſions; I have, ſhe ſays, *neither the air nor the language of a girl accuſtomed to live by her handy-work*; thoſe about me ſeem *more like my maids than my companions*. By this obſervation, you would imagine her inclined to think advantageouſly of me; on the contrary, ſhe thinks very ill of me. To a diſpoſition extremely miſtruſtful, ſhe adds a very unfavourable opinion of her ſex: It is ſaid her own experience formerly taught her both the weakneſs and frailty of it. I am unwilling to

believe it. I was in hopes of being the object of her indifference, and am ſorry to find myſelf the object of her curioſity. She has given poſitive orders to watch all my actions. Cecily, a young woman attached to her, has had the good-nature to inform me of the employment *Madam has honoured her with*, as ſhe terms it. I aſſured her ſhe might fulfil all the duties of it without offending me.

Farewell, my dear Hortenſia, you are my only, my whole comfort. How delightful is it to have ſo tender, ſo ſympathizing a friend! to think that we may be one day united again: This hope ſupports and revives me in my moſt melancholy moments; it opens to me an happy futurity, if, however, it be poſſible for a heart ſo violently agitated ever to recover that peace, that calm whence all happineſs proceeds.

LETTER XXIV.

WHAT a ſtrange employment, my dear Hortenſia, to collect together the *ſcattered expreſſions in my letters*; to *examine* them; to put an interpretation on them *natural* enough, perhaps, but rather irkſome and grievous to your friend. Why *determine in your own mind*; why endeavour *to perſuade me*, to *convince me*, that, *by a voluntary ſelf-deluſion, I diſguiſe and diſſemble the real diſpoſition of my ſoul?*

I, my dear, *diſguiſe the nature of my ſentiments to you!* if there is a *ſecret in my heart*, I do not know it. Oh! who ſhould induce me to conceal this ſecret from you? why do you accuſe me now of a *reſervedneſs* you never ſuſpected me of before?

My friendſhip for the Marquis de Germeuil, is expreſſed in my letters with all the marks characteriſtic of the moſt tender and diſintereſted love: I am in love, you are ſure,

deeply and paſſionately in love. Paſſionately! give me leave not to think ſo. Doubtleſs I love Monſ. de Germeuil; I love him tenderly; his perſon is agreeable to me, his wit engages me, his fine qualities affect me, his friendſhip flatters me; his ſentiments, his intentions ennoble me in my own eyes; nothing would appear hard to me in order to preſerve his eſteem; it is dearer to me than my exiſtence.——You are going to repeat to me, *your friendſhip is love.* Very well, my dear, I will venture to combat this opinion, and to attack it with the ſame reaſons you make uſe of in ſupport of it.

If love *draw* us on with *violence*; if it *maſter* our ſouls; if we cannot oppoſe any long *reſiſtance* to its *impetuous deſires*; if it *deſtroy the wiſeſt reſolutions*; if it *mock the greateſt obſtacles*; if it have the art to *level every difficulty*; if *reflection, prudence, duty,* raiſe *but a feeble barrier* in its way; if it *break through it in its rapid career:* I ſpeak it with confidence, I affirm it with truth, my *friendſhip* is not *love,* has no reſemblance to love.

Never,

Never, Hortenſia, never ſhall my reaſon, *baffled* by that fatal inclination, *leave me defenceleſs:* I will never renounce the laws which honor and gratitude impoſe on me. No, I will not ſow trouble and diſſention in hearts united by nature and ſacred ties: The unhappy girl, adopted by Madam d'Auterive, ſhall never light the brand of diſcord in the breaſts of the family. I will reſpect the niece of my generous protectreſs! her heirs have abandoned me, have caſt me off, but they ſhall not deſpiſe me. Forgotten by them, and by the whole world, I will not awaken the remembrance of my unfortunate birth by a ſtep inconſiderate, bold, and capable of ruining him who urges me to it. The adopted child of a worthy lady ſhall preſerve, at leaſt, the rich inheritance which cannot be torn from her; an inviolable attachment to her duty, and the comforting certainty of being always able to ſay to herſelf, My misfortune is the effect of chance, and not of my own imprudence.

Madam de Terville ſeems bent on vexing and mortifying me. She has juſt ſent

to make me a moſt ridiculous propoſal in very diſobliging terms. Oh! how would Monſ. de Germeuil be humbled if he knew the diſpoſitions of that lady with regard to the perſon whom he would honour with the name of his companion. Farewel, my dear, in a ſhort time I ſhall write to you oftener. Every thing tells me I ſhall not be long here.

LETTER XXV.

IT is now two in the morning: I ſhould in vain attempt to taſte the ſweets of ſleep, which will not viſit this noiſy * hotel for ſome time; every thing is in an inceſſant hurry and confuſion, and I doubt whether they are ever acquainted here with peaceful reſt.

To-morrow I quit this houſe, and that without any regret: I am ſorry to be obliged to enter into the particulars of this diſagreeable quarrel; but I muſt inform you why Madam de Terville diſmiſſes me, or, to expreſs myſelf better, ſhamefully turns me away from her daughter's ſervice. Would you believe it, my dear, ſhe wants to marry me! This haughty domineering woman, pretends that her pleaſure, or ſlighteſt caprices, are to be laws to all about her; and to refuſe to ſubmit to them, is, in her eyes, an unpardonable crime.

* The name of noblemen's houſes at Paris.

From

From the very firſt days of my entering into this ſervice, Madam de Terville's houſe-ſteward, a man ſomewhat in years, ſeemed very aſſiduous to oblige me: he got another room added to my little apartment; it was furniſhed by his direction; his ſervants would wait on me; I rewarded their zeal without imagining the motive of it: This man uſually ſpent part of the afternoon in the gallery, and amuſed himſelf with ſeeing the people at work; he often ſpoke to me; his age and complaiſance induced me to give him polite anſwers. A little before the arrival of the Counteſs, one of Madam de Moncenai's women came to me into my chamber: after a long diſcourſe, whoſe drift I could not at all comprehend, but which ſeemed to promiſe a very intereſting diſcovery, this woman acquainted me that Monſ. Ballin was very *rich*, very *good-natured*, *maſter of his own fortune*, *free in his choice*, and found himſelf *diſpoſed to make my fortune*, and to ſettle the whole of it on me, if *I would conſent to marry him*.

You

You may eaſily gueſs how much this propoſal, which ſhe looked on as ſo *advantageous*, mortified and diſguſted me: my diſcontented countenance, my abſolute refuſal, ſurpriſed her; ſhe inſiſted on it, and I had much ado to perſuade her that Monſ. Ballin's offers would be all to no purpoſe.

Far from being diſcouraged, this man perſiſted; he ſet the whole family to ſolicit me: every body found the effects of his ill humour; Madam de Moncenai's maids began to banter him; when Madam de Terville returned home, her's did the ſame; vexation and paſſion ſoured the poor old man's temper; at firſt they laughed at it, afterwards they complained of it: Madam de Terville was told the cauſe of her ſteward's moroſeneſs; ſhe fell into a moſt violent fury with him, ſent for him, called him madman, and would have diſcharged him: He confeſſed his extravagant love, threw himſelf at the feet of his miſtreſs, put her in mind of his long, his faithful ſervices, and beſought her to give me to him as the reward of his attachment to her intereſt.

By

By a conſequence of the inconceivable caprice of this lady, far from being angry at the confeſſion of her old ſervant, ſhe found his caſe *quite affecting*, promiſed to end the matter to his liking, forbid her maids to rally Monſ. Ballin, cried out an hundred times over, *Alas, poor man!* and immediately ſent to let me know ſhe required me to marry him, and *ordered* me to think ſeriouſly of it.

I had juſt received this odd meſſage when I wrote to you laſt; I was in hopes that Madam de Terville would not be ſo unjuſt as to imagine ſhe had a right to diſpoſe of me; I was miſtaken; yeſterday in the evening ſhe ſent for me to attend her; ſhe was undreſſing when I came into her room; I will not repeat to you what ſhe ſaid, nor my anſwers; my *diſobedience* exciting her indignation, ſhe flew into a violent paſſion with me without moderation, and I may ſay without decency: My figure, my air, the delicacy of my features, were the ſubject of her keeneſt raillery; ſhe exclaimed againſt the

the caprice of nature, that *ſuch creatures as I ſhould have ſo many uſeleſs charms!* ſhe cruelly aſked me, who I was, and *whence I came*; *who inſpired me with the pride of oppoſing her will?* what *I meant* by turning the head of a man who belonged to her, and whoſe courtſhip was an honor to me; ſhe *did not intend he ſhould grow quite mad*; *I might chuſe either to marry him, or leave the houſe immediately.*

I wept bitterly, I ſaid nothing, *my boldneſs* ſeemed *unſupportable*; ſhe diſcharged me, forbidding me to appear before her any more. As I was going out of the room, ſomebody ſpoke, probably in my behalf, for I heard the Counteſs anſwer, *Good God! the world is full of theſe female adventurers, of theſe proud beggars, who, by the help of a tolerable face, and a ſtory ready prepared, might engage one in their behalf, were one to be off one's guard; what is her air, her education, her modeſty, her wit to me! let her obey me, or go out of doors.*

To-morrow I propoſe returning to good Madam de Beaumont's; I ſhall reſume my

my former employment, I ſhall be free from control; no body will diſpute with me the inconteſtable right of following the dictates of my own will.

In my misfortune, two valuable poſſeſſions are left me, honor and liberty. How can I deprive myſelf of the one, ſo neceſſary to the preſervation of the other? Is not liberty the ſource of courage; of that inward ſentiment which ſupports us amidſt our ſufferings, and renders our firmneſs victorious over our wrongs? Deſpondency muſt be the natural conſequence of extreme dependence. In ſuch a ſituation, we inſenſibly loſe the habit of reſiſting; we accuſtom ourſelves to ſupport humiliation, and to ſuffer injuries; we continue to bluſh at the inſult, but no longer find ſtrength of mind to repel it. Oh, in ſpite of my poverty I will never reduce myſelf to this abject ſtate.

I keep my letter unſealed; — to-morrow, when I am in my old habitation, I will communicate to you the new propoſals of Monſ. de Germeuil; they would agree well enough

with my taſte; but an unſurmountable difficulty prevents my yielding to his requeſt. Why ſhould I be obliged to contradict every wiſh of ſo dear a friend? Oh! how I ſhould like to be able to teſtify my compliance.

Eleven at night.

All is changed, my dear, I am ſtill at the Hotel de Terville; I am kept here; I am promiſed to be uſed with kindneſs, and in ſpite of my reluctance to ſtay, I could not avoid ſacrificing my reſentment to ſo obliging and ſingular a character as hers, who, to uſe her own words, *has taken me under her protection.*

At ten in the morning I had packed up my trunks, and was going down with a deſign to ſend them away, when Cecily, that young favourite of Madam de Terville, who had orders to obſerve me, met me, and ſtopping me on the ſtairs; You are very late, Mademoiſelle, ſaid ſhe, in your attendance on the young Marchioneſs; ſhe

ſhe has been at her frame above this quarter of an hour, and will be ſurpriſed to ſee you ſo remiſs.

After what paſſed yeſterday in your preſence, I anſwered, I have no buſineſs in Madam de Moncenai's cloſet: Her mother ordered me to begone, and this is the only one of all her orders which I am diſpoſed to obey. You do not know, then, ſaid ſhe, that her orders are nothing here without mine? You ſhall ſtay, I inſiſt on it; I order it: You muſt put away that ſorrowful look, and ſtay where you are.

I did not much reliſh this kind of joking; ſhe perceived it, took my hand, and, leading me gently along, forced me to go into my chamber. Seeing my eyes filled with tears, Oh he, what a child, ſaid ſhe in an endearing accent, What, becauſe a woman is ridiculous, fantaſtic, or ill-natured, muſt you cry? it is very ſilly: Do as I do, you will live eaſily with Madam de Terville. By ſhewing a perfect tranquillity in thoſe moments when

when ſhe ſtrives to vex me, I deprive her of the pleaſure of tormenting me: ſhe loves, hates, careſſes, and chides me twenty times in a day: I contemplate, without emotion, the extreme variety of her humour, and it amuſes me. She flies into paſſions, ſcolds, calms, and compoſes herſelf; I, for my part, ſtill unmoved, and even-tempered, preſerve the advantage which my good ſpirits give me over her, and which, without admitting it, ſhe is forced to yield to. By being miſtreſs of myſelf, I am able to alter her conceits; I guide her as I like; ſhe ſays what ſhe pleaſes, does what I would have her, and all is well.

I congratulate you, Mademoiſelle, ſaid I, on having diſcovered a way to live contented with Madam de Terville; my temper would not bend ſo eaſily.—You muſt alter this temper, replied ſhe with warmth; you have an elevated ſoul, and ſenſibility of heart; uſeleſs advantage! in every condition of life, theſe two qualities are prejudicial to happineſs; you are out of your proper place, it is eaſy to ſee this; and ſo am I, perhaps, but a happy turn of mind

makes

makes me look with chearfulneſs on every thing that raiſes melancholy reflections in you. It is prudent to try to diminiſh the weight of one's ſufferings; to adopt new ideas in a new ſituation: if we cannot avoid ſuffering, there are, at leaſt, comforting compenſations for all the ills of life. For inſtance, it is no very agreeable ſituation to be the *humble friend* of Madam de Terville; to owe every thing, not to her goodneſs, but to the neceſſity ſhe finds of having me with her: but it would be ſtill more mortifying to be like her, to be as old, and to have her features and her humour. Whilſt I hear or look at her, I reckon myſelf happy to be Cecily. But I will not detain you longer, continued ſhe; come down, Madam de Moncenai deſires, Madam de Terville orders, and I beſeech you to do it. All is gay, all is ſmiling here; the Marquis de Terville, who arrived laſt night, has overjoyed the heart of his mother: I will ſee you again this evening; we will have ſome talk together: You have need of my leſſons; I will teach you the art that makes the rich and great happy; it is this, to love one's ſelf; to have a great value for one's

ſelf

ſelf; to look down on all nature beſides; and to conſider others as created entirely forour uſe or amuſement.

I ſtood out long againſt her intreaties and her careſſes; ſhe removed every difficulty which I oppoſed to her deſires; ſhe ſtrengthened me againſt my apprehenſions: You ſhall never hear any more of the ſteward, ſaid ſhe. Yeſterday, at her *coucher*, the Counteſs was determined to protect him; I thought proper to approve of the union ſhe intended; by degrees I began to banter; a happy expreſſion I uſed threw her into a fit of laughter; all her compaſſion vaniſhed; the poor love-ſick Ballin ſtruck her fancy as a *fooliſh, doating old fellow, who had the aſſurance to court a pretty young girl, who might do a great deal better for herſelf: Poor Sophia! —ſhe was perfectly in the right to refuſe him*: that moment ſhe ordered her upper chambermaid to forbid him thinking any more of you, ſpeaking to you, looking at you, or even coming into the gallery when you are there; and I am ordered to bid you ſtay. A never-failing method to cure people of their partiality, is to throw an air of ridicule

dicule on the object which inſpires it; for the misfortune of human nature, this weapon is too often employed on occaſions where it becomes the greateſt cruelty.

I have yielded, my dear, I have ſuffered myſelf to be guided by Cecily. The Marchioneſs received me with an air of kindneſs; I ſhould have been ſorry to loſe you, ſaid ſhe, but I was almoſt ſure that Cecily would find ſome method to appeaſe my mother. This ſpeech moved me; I anſwered by making a profound curteſy; I was unable to ſpeak. Madam de Terville ſaw me after dinner; ſhe ſeemed not to remember ſhe had been angry: at the firſt ſight of her my heart felt a ſtrange emotion; I find I can never forget her haughtineſs and her injuſtice. I thought to have ſaid ſomewhat about Monſ. de Germeuil, but it is late, I muſt endeavour to get ſome reſt, and this letter is already very long. Farewell, my dear Hortenſia.

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

I AM ſorry for having made you uneaſy by repeating the harſh expreſſions of Madam de Terville: ſo long as I ſtay in this houſe, the remembrance of ſo mortifying a ſcene will never be eraſed from my memory. I cannot look upon that lady, nor even hear the ſound of her voice, without feeling a diſagreeable emotion. But then, my dear, whither can I go? hurried away by a ſudden reſentment, I was for returning to Madam de Beaumont's; but I had forgotten my reaſons for leaving her. Things continue the ſame; the motives which obliged me to leave her, ſtill ſubſiſt in their full force. Monſ. de Germeuil writes me word of his ſpeedy return to Paris; he has not given over his deſigns: his obſtinacy, and my own weakneſs, frighten me, make me dread to ſee or hear him.

On reading his letters, one would imagine he never opened mine; he writes to me, but never anſwers me. I imagined him leſs

leſs eager, leſs wedded to his own notions. Muſt I, in order to eradicate a fruitleſs paſſion from his heart, make a new ſacrifice? deprive myſelf of the only comfort of my life; appear inſenſible, ungrateful, and put an end, by my ſilence, to a correſpondence which is dear to me; muſt I abſolutely break with him? Oh, this would be a moſt cruel neceſſity indeed! What, conceal all my ſentiments from him, and even hide the effects of a tender, an innocent friendſhip!

After having wearied myſelf with reflections on the intereſt of Monſ. de Germeuil; on the impoſſibility of connecting it with his deſires; when I think him convinced of the reaſonableneſs, and the force of my objections; when I imagine he is going to tell me, *very well, let us be only friends*, he exacts a formal promiſe of me to be his; he conjures me to give him a written one, and to ſend it him. *If I grant him this requeſt, it will ſet his mind at eaſe, calm his anxious breaſt, and will enable him to wait, with patience, the accompliſhment of his happineſs, from time and more favourable events.* In his laſt letter, he

he marks out for me a plan of conduct which I ſhould like to fix upon; I would follow it, were it poſſible for me to carry it into execution without his aſſiſtance. He begs I would chuſe ſome convent to retire to with Pauline and her niece. He will viſit me *often* if I *give him leave*; *ſeldom* if I *require* it. He inſiſts upon this propoſal, and on my immediately quitting the hotel de Terville. He trembles *at the dangers to which my ſtay here expoſes me, he fears ſome, of which I can have no idea.*

Oh my dear Hortenſia! ever ſince the fatal moment when I loſt Madam d'Auterive, my every wiſh has been for ſuch a retreat as he preſſes me to make choice of. I ſhould be very happy to live in one, to ſhut myſelf up in it for ever, and there to ſpend the remainder of my days. At the moment of my taking my laſt leave of the world, I might dare to open my heart to Monſ. de Germeuil; he would then become acquainted with thoſe ſentiments in me he complains of; he would no longer reproach me with a *cruel indifference.*

By what ſtrange caprice inſeparable from my deſtiny, am I not permitted to expect from a friend, ſo eager to ſerve me, the only favour which decency will allow me to receive at his hands: Oh! I would not bluſh to accept from the nephew of Madam d'Auterive, the ſmall ſum neceſſary to gain me admittance into a convent, and to place me there for life. In thoſe very moments when I afflicted him by rejecting his offers; I wiſhed an hundred, and an hundred times, to communicate my deſires for that purpoſe; my knowledge of his love withheld me then, and ſtill does withhold me. Would it be reaſonable—would it be generous, to ask the only favour he cannot poſſibly grant me, without doing a manifeſt violence to his every ſentiment.

I this moment received your two letters. I am very ſorry for what you tell me in the laſt. What my dear, a new incident will perhaps retard the deciſion, you had been flattered with, and which you were told would ſoon take place? But can they go back to ſettlements of ſo old a date? This unjuſt

requeſt

requeſt will never be allowed I hope. You are always in my thoughts: your ſlighteſt ſufferings give me pain; my heart is afflicted, I partake in your uneaſineſs, your tears. Oh, if at leaſt one of us were happy! but on that ſuppoſition, ſhould we not be both ſo?

LETTER XXVII.

YOUR firſt lines have diſſipated my fears; I learn with pleaſure the iſſue of ſo flagrant an attempt; you have carried it; this is a ſecond advantage, and the favourable diſpoſition of the judges appears to me a certain proof of the goodneſs of your cauſe.

Cecily's liking for me, inſpires you with *the ſame ſentiments for her:* her *humour pleaſes you*, and makes you *deſire to be better acquainted with her*. I am ſorry it is not in my power to ſatisfy your curioſity in regard to her: her birth and adventures are alike unknown here. Before ſhe came to the hotel, ſhe lived at a convent, where Madam de Terville had a niece, a boarder. Cecily, being in great intimacy with the young relation of the Counteſs, preſented herſelf to her, was approved of, and conſented to accept of the place of *humble friend*, in the room of another whoſe recent loſs gave

Madam

Madam de Terville ſome uneaſineſs, and even ſome perplexity.

As to her figure, it is impoſſible to conceive a prettier. I do not know whether I can eaſily give you a juſt idea of her: one would think that the graces themſelves took delight in forming her: neither ſhort nor tall, the moſt exact proportion gives eaſe and nobleneſs to all her motions; juſt fleſh enough to heighten the natural freſhneſs of her complexion, without in the leaſt ſpoiling the elegance of her ſhape; her features are not ſo regular, as they are perfectly well marked; ſhe has an ingenious countenance, an arch look, a deciſive manner, wit, vivacity, an accompliſhed education, and great acuteneſs. She obſerves with attention, judges without mercy, and cenſures with ſeverity, at leaſt it appears ſo to me. I can hardly think the men capable of thoſe exceſſes, which ſhe accuſes them of. Her empire over the mind of the Counteſs makes the whole hotel ſubject to her will: ſhe governs, but ſhe obliges; her power always employ-

ed to the advantage of others, is not the object of envy; as her continuance in favour ſurpriſes every body, people endeavour to diſcover the cauſe of it, and this is what I have been able to gather, with a view to impart it to you.

The Counteſs has not lived always in France. During the life of Monſ. de Terville, ſhe was at Naples, Madrid, Vienna and Rome, where he was ſucceſſively Ambaſſador. She has kept up a correſpondence in all the different courts, where that able negotiator acquired the higheſt conſideration: her houſe is ſtill open to all ſtrangers, who are introduced to her by the miniſters of their Princes: they look on her as one of the rarities they are to ſee in France. And yet in the eyes of her countrymen, Madam de Terville preſents nothing worthy of their curioſity, or of conciliating the ſuffrage of other nations. They allow her that good breeding which perſons brought up in courts habitually contract: they find in her a ſufficient knowledge of the world, abundance of ſmall talk, very little wit, with vaſt pretenſions,

and

and unſupportable vanity. But out of her own country, ſhe is called *a celebrated woman*; people think themſelves happy to correſpond with her; her letters are ſought after, ſhewn, copied, handed about, admired! ſhall I tell you all? They ſay, but perhaps it is a calumny, but they ſay that ſhe never had ſkill enough to write a ſingle note; that ſhe neither underſtands her own language, nor the language of the countries where ſhe has lived; that ſhe owes all her brilliant reputation, to the lady whoſe place Cecily now occupies: it is certain this young woman is continually writing; ſhe has no other employment, and on poſt days Madam de Terville ſhuts herſelf up with her. If this is not ſo, appearances are certainly againſt her.

No, Monſ. de Germeuil is not arrived: his mother, who is a little indiſpoſed, keeps him ſtill at Granſon. He writes often to me: he is always complaining of me, and even with ſome bitterneſs. I foreſee, it will be impoſſible for me to avoid coming to a rupture with him, however afflicting.

He is ſometimes ſo unreaſonable, and ſo firmly adheres to his own opinion! Oh! Hortenſia, the men obſtinately perſiſt in what they demand: their very ſubmiſſion is tyranny; they urge with an indiſcreet ardour; they dare even to *exact*, to *threaten*. Monſ. de Germeuil tells me he will give over writing to me——Well, let him give over, let him abandon me; may I never be moved, vexed, ruffled by his unjuſt reproaches——I wiſhed to preſerve his friendſhip, you know it my dear, the utmoſt of my deſires was confined to ſome ſlight marks of his remembrance. If theſe are refuſed me, I ſhall doubtleſs be grieved; but though weak enough to regret them, I will not be ſo mean as to court them; I will not purchaſe the pleaſure of being beloved by a complaiſance criminal in my own eyes. As I cannot, as I ought never to be Monſ. de Germeuil's, I will not put myſelf in a ſtate of dependence on him; I will not contract any voluntary obligations: I will accept none of his aſſiſtance, ſince I am in a ſituation to ſupport myſelf without being beholden for it to any.

You ask me whether Monſ. de Terville is agreeable: indeed I cannot tell; though I always ſee him ſome part of the day at his ſiſter's. If I may believe Cecily, he is a young fellow exceeding *vain*, *giddy*, *very froward*, and *very impertinent*. She paints the Marquis de Moncenai in colours not much more to his advantage. He appeared to me cold and ſullen; ſhe pretends he is mad. His outward appearance, ſhe ſays, *is grave and ſolemn*; he *errs by method*; fancies himſelf *a wit*, *philoſopher*, *politician*, *capable of reforming every order in the ſtate. They who really poſſeſs the qualities which he enjoys only in his own imagination, find him out to be ignorant*, *head-ſtrong*, *talkative*, *and always tireſome*. You muſt not, however, entirely rely on the judgment of Cecily; for as I have already told you, ſhe is not over and above charitable.

Farewell, my dear, accept my tender congratulations on your new hopes.

LETTER XXVIII.

HOW diſagreeable it is, my dear Hortenſia, to live in a ſtation entirely different from that for which the habits contracted in our early education utterly diſqualify us: not to be able to carry conſequence enough by mere outſide, or to conciliate the regard of the world, by any other than ſome internal qualities, often liable to the ſuſpicion of affectation, and always of little conſideration in the eyes of thoſe who poſſeſs them not.

The Marquis de Terville honours me with a particular attention; which is become extremely irkſome and diſagreeable to me. He is determined, he ſays, to *court me in form*; as my *little vanity ſeems to exact it*. Since his return, he has preciſely *driven to deſpair twenty pretty young women, in order to oblige one ingrate, who hardly takes notice of his aſſiduity*, or, at leaſt, *affects* not to be *pleaſed with it*. He begins *to wonder*, and even *to be angry* at my *coldneſs*. *Indifference is prejudicial*

prejudicial to beauty; my modeſty, my reſerve, are precious graces it is true; my bluſhes heighten the luſtre of the fineſt complexion in the world: but ſo much ſeverity may caſt a gloom over my charms, and weaken their impreſſion; it gives me the air of being neither *acquieſcing*, nor *ſociable*. We *raiſe our eyes, we look, we liſten, and* we *anſwer; ſilence* and *diſdain determine nothing, and end in nothing*; does *Minerva's* gravity *ſuit with the form of Hebe?*

This inſipid ſtuff, tires and provokes me. Madam de Moncenai hears all this, and is vaſtly diverted with it. She cannot ſee *why all this little bantering ſhould make me angry.* Her brother's boldneſs and impudence, are no more than a *charming vivacity* in her eyes. If chance throw me in the way of the Marquis de Moncenai, he ſtops me whether I will or no, and addreſſes me much in the ſame language.

Cecily endeavours in vain to keep me here; the houſe becomes inſupportable to me. Since the arrival of her huſband, the Marchioneſs

Marchioneſs ſees a great deal more company. When ſhe does not go out, ſhe obliges me to work all day in her great cloſet; ſhe's eternally going in and out: every body comes to admire her work and mine. Thus expoſed to the eyes of ſo many people, I ſhall hardly eſcape being known. Some relation or friend of Madam d'Auterive may ſee me, and inform Madam de Terville of my ſad adventure: to be unfortunate is no recommendation with that lady, and the uncertainty of my condition would draw on me freſh inſults from her.

You take part with Monſ. de Germeuil; you think *I ought to accept of a ſure aſyle, a decent retreat.* You ask me if I am very ſure *that I do not deſerve the reproach of an exceſſive pride?* Am I not unjuſt in taking ſuch high offence *at the complaints of the Marquis?* You preſs me to *examine myſelf ſeriouſly.* If a perſon diſtinguiſhed by *her noble turn of mind, annexes the idea of ſhame to the accepting a generous offer*; you deſire me to inform you, *what kind of merit that muſt be, which can excite and keep up a ſpirit of benevolence, in a compaſſionate mind, ſince* according to my principles

principles as you ſay, *there is no obliging any but the meaneſt and worſt of men?*

By promiſing to partake one day with you in the fortune you expect, and by giving you my word to live with you, I imagine, my dear, I have anſwered that queſtion. I am ſenſibly affected, but not humbled with your offers; I have promiſed to accept from your hands the aſſiſtance which I *obſtinately* refuſed to owe to Monſ. de Germeuil. In my preſent ſituation, I would accept, without heſitation, the *protection*, the *favours* of one of my own ſex. Believe me Hortenſia, misfortunes have not *ſoured my temper*; have not made me *inflexible*. I aſpire not to the vain glory of diſtinguiſhing myſelf by an affectation of a diſintereſtedneſs againſt nature: men do not prefer, through taſte, labour to reſt, indigence to affluence, ſlavery to liberty; I have not an *exalted mind*, I do not aim at *chimerical virtues*, but circumſtances do not permit us always to adopt general maxims, and often impoſe on us particular obligations.

Allow me, my dear, to ask you a queſtion in my turn. How muſt I conduct myſelf in regard to Monſ. de Germeuil, if yielding to his intreaties, I ſhould accept of a retreat, where every comfort muſt be the fruit of his liberality? What proof ſhould I dare to give him of my gratitude? We do in ſome meaſure repay the good we have received, by attachment, by complaiſance, and by a continual attention to gratify, and even to prevent the wiſhes of thoſe whom we have conſented to be obliged to. In my ſituation, forced to withſtand perpetually, the wiſhes of the man, who means to make my whole life a ſcene of happineſs, muſt I then reſolve to appear inſenſible to his goodneſs? He would make me eaſy and happy! whilſt I cannot, muſt not, do any thing for him! how often ſhall I tell you, my dear friend; how often repeat, that I will never accept of obligations which I can not poſſibly return, without being wanting to my benefactor, or to myſelf?

I beg of you, no more to renew a ſubject which appears to us under ſuch different lights.

lights. Let us for ever put an end to this long diſpute. I do not like to oppoſe your notions; I ſhould think myſelf ſurer of the propriety of my own, were you to approve them. Your reflections throw me into doubt, and uncertainty; I fear to err; I have need to recollect every moment that you love me too well, to be impartial between Monſ. de Germeuil and myſelf; if you deſired my happineſs leſs than you do, you would not be ſo much inclined to blame my refuſal. Farewell, my dear, I am not *angry*. Oh my God! can I ever be angry with you?

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

WHAT a long ſtory am I going to tell you, my dear Hortenſia; what different emotions of the mind, does the ſhort ſpace of one day bring about! This morning, humbled, diſtreſſed, I was giving myſelf over to the moſt cruel reflections; the world preſented to my view nothing but hard-hearted or wicked perſons: this evening, in an hour of comfort, and pleaſing ſenſations, I admire the aſtoniſhing difference of the mind, of the heart, of the ſenſations of thoſe mortals, ſo like in appearance, and yet ſo diſtinguiſhed by the ſurpriſing variety of their principles and manners.

A little before noon, Madam de Moncenai left me alone in her cloſet, while ſhe went to her mother, where the Marquis de Monglas waited for her: the inſtant ſhe went out, his valet de chambre preſented me a letter, which he ſaid he had orders to deliver to me. Deceived by the manner of the

the folding, and thinking one man alone had any pretenſions to write to me; without examining either the arms, or hand, I immediately broke it open. How ſhall I expreſs my anger, my indignation. The letter was from the Marquis de Terville.

Preſumptuous man! dare to write to me, dare to propoſe a private interview to talk to me *of his love, to concert proper meaſures to carry on, and to conceal our ſecret correſpondence. My eyes aſſure him that my heart is not inſenſible, which gives him real ſatisfaction.* This impudent fellow imagined he was able to dazzle me, by his inſolent offers: he preſumed to make a merit of his wicked intentions, of placing me in the claſs of thoſe rich and contemptible women, who ſhamelеſsly making a figure with the wages of their wickedneſs, become the jeſt of one ſex, and the diſgrace of the other.

Hurried on by a violent emotion, I ran, I flew to the apartment of Madam de Terville: Cecily was coming out of her chamber; ſhe ſtopped me at the door, and pulling me into a cloſet, preſſed me to let her know

the cauſe of the extreme confuſion ſhe ſaw me in.

Oppreſſed, all in tears, unable to utter a word, I gave her the odious letter: ſhe ran it over without ſeeming ſurpriſed, repeating, my God! ſtill the old ſtuff over again! and looking on me with a ſedate countenance; if nonſenſe and impudence, ſaid ſhe, ſhock you to ſuch a degree, and afflict you ſo extremely, you do not ſeem to lay out for an eaſy and happy life. What mean this confuſion, theſe tears? What do you reproach yourſelf with? I have received twenty from the ſame hand, all of them in the like impertinent ſtrain: Monſ. de Terville knows not to this very hour, whether I ever read them. It is doing a coxcomb too much honour, to ſhew him any reſentment; you ſhould never let him ſee that it is in his power to give you the leaſt emotion. He is not always awed by wiſdom, but contempt is a ſure way to get rid of him. And pray what was your deſign, by going to the Counteſs, continued ſhe? Did you mean to ſhew her this letter, and to demand juſtice of her;

her; did you expect any reparation for this outrage? If you did, you must have very little knowledge of the world! do you know in what light Madam de Terville will view these offensive proposals? Why she will see the danger of her son's forming such a connexion, attended with a vast expence; the protracting, or even breaking off the intended match, about which she is now in treaty with her niece; she will be displeased with you, for being the object of his passion; she will fear you, and hate you; she will look on you as an artful designing girl; she will suspect you of wanting to dazzle her, to deceive her, and to conceal from her your real sentiments; she will consider your tears as artifice, and your resentment as affectation: it is well if she do not accuse you of enveigling, and seducing her son: as He is not to be in the wrong, You certainly must: a kind of prisoner here, and forced to live under the eyes of the Countess, you will meet with a thousand mortifications, and if you should try to leave the house and make your escape, perhaps she will have recourse to violent methods to make sure of you.

Why

Why then Mademoiſelle, cried I, why did you force me to ſtay in a houſe where innocence and miſery can hope for no protection? I will leave it this inſtant, quit it for ever. Kept like a priſoner here! who dares keep me! Let me alone, let me alone, ſaid I, ſtruggling to get from her, while ſhe held me by my gown. Far from yielding to my requeſt, ſhe continued to hold me, and to beg me to hear her, when the door opening, a lady came in calling Cecily, and chiding her at the ſame time, for having made her wait for a muſic book ſhe had deſired her to bring her.

Struck with the ſound of her voice, I looked on her; ſweetneſs, grace and benignity ſhed a thouſand charms over thoſe features, I now recollected: conſidering them attentively, I endeavoured to find out whether I did not view in the niece of Madam de Terville, in the Marchioneſs de Mongias, that amiable Henrietta d'Alby, formerly our companion in the convent, whoſe ſad but intereſting melancholy had ſo deeply affected us both.

A moment

A moment removed all my doubts; ſcarce had Madam de Monglas caſt a look towards the ſide of the room where I was, when crying out with ſurprize and joy, ſhe ran to me with open arms; it is Mademoiſelle de Saint-Aulay; it is my dear Sophia, ſhe frequently repeated, preſſing me to her boſom: what! to find you here, at my aunt's; you, my old, my beloved companion! what felicity, how I rejoice at this happy meeting.

Struck with her friendſhip, moved with her kindneſs, charmed to ſee her in a condition ſo different from that which ſhe once dreaded, and yet unable to ſpeak, awed by the diſtance which time and events had put between us, I dared not to give way to the emotions of my heart; I embraced her with timidity; I was ſilent; I could ſcarce refrain from tears, or hide my confuſion.

She perceived my perplexity, but miſtaking the cauſe, what! Mademoiſelle, ſaid ſhe, do not you know me? You no longer remember

remember that Henrietta, whoſe ſorrows you once ſoothed with ſo much goodneſs? Whom you left in the utmoſt affliction at your loſs; at ſeeing you quit the convent where ſhe was doomed to ſpend her days; to whom you gave, a few days after your departure, ſo diſtinguiſhing a mark of the moſt generous attention?—I ſtill keep that beautiful baſket embroidered with your own hands, and filled with ſo many pretty trinkets. My parents cruelly refuſed me thoſe ſuperfluities, which they termed *worldly*; I paſſionately longed for them: the pleaſure of ſetting myſelf off with them, ſeemed to me then as a ſovereign good. I was not even allowed to write to you, or to ſee you again; all correſpondence without the walls was forbidden me; I could not expreſs my gratitude to you, it lived only in my heart; your idea has always been preſent to my memory, and I muſt own I ſee with grief the ſmall impreſſion I have made on yours.

Alas, cried I, ſtung with this reproach, I know you well, Madam, your features are no ſtrangers to my eyes; the ſound of your voice

voice even moved my heart: pardon this reſerve, which ſeems to offend you, in a poor unhappy girl, who now has neither companions, nor friends: alone, abandoned, without any retreat, any ſupport, ſhe fears to be thought too familiar, by ſhewing her ſenſibility; believe me Madam, my ſentiments are the ſame, but my fortune is changed, and that prevents me from expreſſing myſelf withour conſtraint.

Poor, and forſaken! repeated the Marchioneſs; who? you my lovely Sophia! you, the heireſs to an immenſe fortune! you, adored by a family ſo rich, ſo powerfully allied. Did I underſtand you well? without protection, without any retreat! Oh, good God! and ſitting down on a Sopha, and placing me by her, explain this ſtrange diſcourſe to me, ſaid ſhe, in the moſt affectionate accent; conceal nothing from me, I deſerve your confidence, you ſhall find me worthy of it: Oh! do not fancy yourſelf without a companion, without a friend; my heart challenges both titles: ſpeak, my dear, ſpeak; ſure to intereſt me, to find that I partake in all your afflictions,

you may with ſafety pour them forth into my boſom.

Oh Hortenſia, how ſweet, how conſoling are the expreſſions of a tender humanity! how much did I find myſelf affected with the goodneſs of the Marchioneſs. The preſence of Cecily did not prevent the effuſions of my heart: which freely expanded itſelf; a conciſe recital of the events which reduced me to live with Madam de Moncenai, laid open my ſituation to Madam de Monglas; I did not bluſh before her, at being unfortunate: but more humbled by the propoſals of the Marquis de Terville, than by my poverty, I doubted whether I ſhould ſhew her that inſolent letter. But giving it her at laſt, I begged of her to engage the Counteſs to let me depart that inſtant, without obliging me to explain the motives of my ſudden retreat.

I ſhall eaſily obtain that favour of my aunt, ſaid ſhe, in an endearing accent; but my dear Sophia, on quitting this houſe, you muſt come and live at mine. I think myſelf happy to be able to offer you an aſylum; to place you beyond the reach of thoſe dangers

dangers to which your ſituation, youth and beauty, expoſe you: like you, I have experienced the misfortune of being indifferent to every body: Slighted by my parents, and deſtined to a monaſtic life, the habitual ſadneſs of my heart has rendered it ſuſceptible of compaſſion. I ſhall never forget the time in which I wiſhed to inſpire others with it; and the excellent man, whoſe goodneſs changed my fortune; whoſe liberal hand has loaded me with favours, is delighted to ſee me extend my own felicity to every object worthy to partake of it. Come and increaſe my happineſs: the pleaſure of ſeeing you eaſy and contented, will redouble it. You will find a protector, a father, in Monſ. de Monglas; and a ſiſter, an attentive friend, in his happy wife.

Oh! what ſentiments moved my heart whilſt Madam de Monglaſs was ſpeaking to me, and preſſing me to anſwer her; I fancied I ſtill heard the ſweet inflections of the voice of Madam d'Auterive; I ſaw her goodneſs exemplified in the young Marchioneſs; the ſame candor ſhone in her countenance. Surpriſed, melted, penetrated,

my warm emotion would not allow me to expreſs my thoughts. I bathed with tears her hands which held mine. I accept your generous invitation, Madam, ſaid I, with ardour; I accept it without heſitation: Pardon me if my tears are the firſt teſtimony of my gratitude: Suffer me —— She interrupted me, and embracing me again and again, it is I, my dear friend, it is I who am the obliged perſon, ſaid ſhe: ever ſince my happy marriage, I have wiſhed for a companion of my own age, whoſe temper and principles might be agreeable to Monſ. de Monglas, not trouble the order eſtabliſhed in his family, and give into all the amuſements he is fond of. Our meeting is a new ſtroke of that good fortune which of late ſeems to ſmile on me: Next to the pleaſure of ſeeing you in your former brilliant and fortunate condition, I can find nothing more agreeable to my wiſhes than the opportunity of ſerving you. I leave it to Cecily to introduce you to the acquaintance of Monſ. de Monglas; ſhe is acquainted with every thing that concerns us both: but I am in haſte, added ſhe riſing, I will go and beg you of my aunt. As her

ſon

ſon expects a very important ſervice from Monſ. de Monglas, I am ſure of her conſent. The Marquis de Terville is going, with me, to Verſailles; he will ſtay there ſeveral days: To-morrow I am to bring back Monſ. de Monglas. I muſt give him notice of my purpoſe, though I do not at all doubt his conſent. Get yourſelf ready, my dear friend, for on Sunday evening I will come and fetch you; and towards the end of the week we ſhall ſet out for Malzais, a charming ſeat, where we are to ſpend part of the ſummer. I ſtrove in vain to ſpeak of her goodneſs, and the ſentiments ſhe excited in my breaſt: She always ſtopped me with the moſt endearing careſſes; and, bidding me farewell, embracing me with inexpreſſible tenderneſs, after recommending me to Cecily's care, ſhe went back to Madam de Terville.

I retired to my chamber; I would have written to you that moment, but found myſelf too much moved.

Hortenſia, my dear Hortenſia, what happy fortune directed me to Madam de Monglas! How could ſhe preſerve the remembrance of

a ſlight favour which I had forgotten theſe three years?—Did I tell you, that ſhe ſpoke of you? that ſhe loves you ſtill?—But it is very late. I kept Cecily with me a conſiderable time: I was deſirous to learn of her the particulars of the fortune of Madam de Monglas. She told me in confidence that the Counteſs de Terville had made her draw them up in writing for an abſent friend, and ſhe has promiſed me a copy of her little packet. I asked her leave to inſert it in my letter, and have obtained it, under the ſeal of ſecrecy. It is extremely proper I ſhould make you acquainted with thoſe protectors whom heaven has ſent to the aſſiſtance of your friend.

Ten in the Morning.

Madam de Terville conſents to let me go with Madam de Monglas; I forgot to mention it to you. The following is Cecily's account, which you will ſend me back, when you have read it. Farewell, my dear, partake in my joy and hopes.

Cecily's

Cecily's packet.

THE Marquis de Monglas, born to an opulent fortune, was by nature endowed with thoſe happy diſpoſitions, which lead us not to look upon riches, as an advantage capable of ſupplying the place of ſtudy and reflection. Maſter of himſelf, after having devoted twenty years to the ſervice of his king, he was reſolved to improve the remainder of his life to the beſt purpoſes. On his return home, a philoſophic ſpirit ſucceeded his love of arms: inflamed with a deſire to ſee, to learn, to refine his taſte, and enlarge his ideas, he quitted France, and after viſiting all the courts of Europe, croſſed the ſeas, wandered over all the barbarous nations, and penetrated to where greedy avarice did once open its guilty way, through the blood of millions, to gorge the rich with ſuperfluities, and give the poor a ſenſe of wants unknown before.

Eighteen years were ſpent in his travels; he was bordering on his ſixtieth, when he re-

viſited the coaſts of France. On ſeeing them, he ſighed! time muſt have carried off many of his friends: the little hopes of meeting again thoſe who were deareſt to his heart, made him tremble on his arrival in Paris; but he had the good fortune to find himſelf among the perſons whom he moſt valued: one of theſe was the Count d'Alby, brother to Madam de Terville, his old ſellow collegian, and brother ſoldier, the partner of his youthful pleaſures, and the object of his conſtant friendſhip.

During the abſence of M. de Monglas, the Count married and became the father of ſeveral children; but being buſied with the cares of the world, and ambitious projects, he could no longer participate with his peaceful and diſintereſted friend, the pleaſures of their former intimacy. However the extreme eaſineſs of the Marquis, and his natural ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, made him readily comply with all ſorts of tempers. The alteration in his friend did not eſtrange him from him. It was then about the beginning of autumn; the Count was ſetting off with all his family

for

for Chazel, an eſtate of his, wherein he took great delight: Monſ. de Monglas promiſed to pay him a viſit there, after he had fulfilled ſome indiſpenſable obligations, and allowed ſome time to the ſettlement of his affairs.

As he had travelled without any great retinue, and lived privately, he was able to lay up above two thirds of his income, during his abſence. He might have inlarged his eſtate; but his taſte did not lie that way; he appropriated his ſavings to purpoſes more agreeable to a ſenſible and generous heart. After a month's ſtay at Paris, he ſet off with a deſign to ſpend a week at Chazel; but was detained at the Count d'Alby's by the emotions of a tender compaſſion, and the deſire of freeing an unfortunate young lady from the cruel condition of life which her parents were preparing for her.

The Count's family conſiſted of three ſons and an only daughter. One of the ſons, who had no other advantage over his brothers, but that of having been born firſt, had the

ſole poſſeſſion of his father's heart, who ſeemed to forget that he owed his younger children the ſame education, and the ſame tenderneſs. The one being a Knight of Malta, and the other intended for the church, they already carried about them the diſtinctive marks of their profeſſion, and the unjuſt ſacrifice of their birth-right, which they were forced to make to the fortune of the elder. Henrietta d'Alby the daughter, hardly out of her childhood, but ſweet tempered, of great ſenſibility, endowed with a thouſand charms and amiable qualities, was deſtined to bury her youth and beauty in the Abby of Panthemon. As ſhe had been brought up in this convent, ſhe was not enough acquainted with the world to be ſenſible of the whole weight of the engagements they would have obliged her to enter into: however ſhe obeyed with regret. Neglected, and almoſt a ſtranger to her whole family, the unfrequent and ſhort viſits of her mother, and of her female relations were ſpent in repreſenting the neceſſity of yielding to the will of her father; every day they preſſed her more and more, and her misfortune ſeemed inevitable.

Deter-

Determined at laſt to ſubmit to her ſad deſtiny, Mademoiſelle d'Alby begged with great earneſtneſs to ſtay ſome little time at her fathers's. She would not enter upon her ſtate of probation till ſhe had obtained this ſlight favour; ſhe was refuſed it a long time, but a lucky chance preſiding over her fortune, ſoftened the hearts of her parents, the moment they were ſetting off for Chazel: They conſented to carry her thither. This journey in the event prepared her lighter chains, a leſs auſtere ſubjection, and ties formed by the ſentiments of gratitude and friendſhip.

Monſ. de Monglas, beheld with grief the management of the Count d'Alby, in regard to his children: he could not ſee without indignation, the cruel and unjuſt difference, which a father dared to put between creatures entruſted by providence, and the laws of ſociety, to his care, under the obligation of the ſtricteſt impartiality, which nature herſelf ſeems to have planted in the breaſt of every parent. He knew mankind too

well to wonder at their habitual inconſiſtency; he knew how much their manners and principles are at a variance, and that by an odd compound of wiſdom and folly, men who are capable of enacting juſt laws, can at the ſame time adopt cuſtoms in downright violation of them.

Monſ. de Monglas obſerved Mademoiſelle d'Alby's deep melancholy; and was much affected with it. The liberty uſually allowed in the country giving him frequent opportunities of converſing with her, he diſcovered great qualities in her, and every day his compaſſion for her increaſed: her youth, the graces of her perſon, the candor of her mind, the noble ſimplicity of her expreſſions, the confidence ſhe repoſed in him, her reſpect for her ſevere parents, whoſe cruelty drew tears from her eyes, and her modeſt complaints, every moment augmented the concern which the Marquis began to take in the fortune of an amiable and diſtreſſed young lady. The natural ſenſibility of his temper had often opened his heart to the ſeducing charms of a paſſion, which age and continual application to ſtudy, made him then little ſuſceptible

ceptible of; but if he no longer followed women upon ſenſual motives, he ſtill loved them; preferred their friendſhip to that of his own ſex, and laughed at the idle declamations of thoſe four philoſophers, who have preſumed to call them the quick-ſands of wiſdom and true happineſs.

Tender compaſſion was not a tranſient ſentiment, ſtill leſs a fruitleſs emotion in the generous ſoul of Monſ. de Monglas. Whilſt he pitied Mademoiſelle d'Alby, he conſidered the means of making her independent and happy: ſeveral occurred to his thoughts, yet none but what were attended with difficulty in the execution; he feared to offend his friend; the pride of Henrietta's father might ſtand in the way of his deſigns; pride is often an hindrance to beneficence: the marquis had no relation to propoſe for her: as he had been abſent ſo many years, he knew nobody, whoſe addreſſes he could promote by ſuch arrangements, as are eaſily made by the rich and generous. However the ſeaſon was faſt advancing, and Henrietta muſt ſoon return to her convent; as his heart was bent on ſerving the young lady,

lady, Monſ. de Monglas at laſt determined on the only project, which but a little before he thought himſelf ſecure he never would have embraced. At firſt he thought of communicating it to the Count d'Alby, but his delicacy induced him to conſult Henrietta: He wanted to be ſure of the diſpoſition of her mind, and to undertake nothing without knowing whether ſhe would approve the ſcheme. It was ſo advantageous to the family, that a violent and tyrannical father might probably uſe the ſame authority to connect her with the world, which he had abuſed in order to baniſh her from it.

One evening, when the young Henrietta, from a terras that commanded a view of the ſea, was admiring the beauty of the ſetting ſun, Monſ. de Monglas, after ſome converſation about indifferent matters, led her to a diſtance from her mother's women, and ſpeaking low enough to be heard by her alone: may I preſume, Mademoiſelle, ſaid he, to ſhew you what a concern I take in your happineſs, how much I am affected with your preſent melancholy ſituation? I have long thought how to deliver you from a

painful

painful reſtraint, reſtore you to the world, and to yourſelf. Why ſhould common opinion, cuſtom, and the laws of decorum, oblige me to propoſe to you a ſtate of dependance, when I would wiſh to free you from your preſent one. The propoſal I make, I confeſs, may not procure you all the pleaſures you may promiſe yourſelf from a change in your condition, at your age; but it will be attended with theſe advantages. You will not be obliged to take the vow of an eternal retreat, and you will have the hopes left you of recovering one day your entire liberty.

The countenance of Mademoiſelle d'Alby was overſpread with bluſhes; ſhe appeared ſurprized, amazed, and caſt her eyes on the ground: accuſtomed to look on her fate as inevitable, ſhe hardly ventured to give her heart up to this firſt ray of hope. But being preſſed to anſwer, ſhe heſitated, ſighed, and with a fearful and faultering accent, do you imagine Sir, do you, ſaid ſhe, imagine you ſhall be able to alter my father's reſolution.

Yes,

Yes, Mademoiſelle, replied Monſ. de Monglas, if mine do not diſpleaſe you. My fortune and his friendſhip aſſure me of a ready compliance on his part; I would have asked and ſhould have obtained it, but I was in doubt as to yours. But what do I offer you, my dear Henrietta? Your cruel deſtiny reduces you to the choice of two ſituations: one of theſe is terrible, the other little ſatisfactory: a gloomy, an eternal retreat, or the hand of an old man, whoſe age and temper of mind, keep him at a diſtance from thoſe vain amuſements, which youth is ſo fond of. Liberty, eaſe, and peace, are the only advantages in my power to promiſe or procure you. A ſmall number of men of ſenſe, and decent women, will form your ſociety; in this narrow but ſelect circle, free to cultivate the gifts you hold from nature, and to enlarge your ideas, you will ſpend thoſe years which are commonly devoted to pleaſures, in fitting yourſelf for that time of life, when their reliſh being paſt, their former votaries find nothing in themſelves capable of ſupplying their loſs, or to fill up thoſe moments they once ſpent in ſearch-

ing after them, in fond expectation, but rarely in the full fruition of them.

I am not acquainted with the pleaſures you mention, ſaid Henrietta, but if my father grants me the favour to live in his houſe, the amuſements it affords will be ſufficient for my happineſs; and if I altered my condition, I ſhould not wiſh for any other. Very well, Mademoiſelle, replied Monſ. de Monglas, I may then flatter myſelf with ſeeing you happy; it is the moſt ardent wiſh of my heart: my conduct will prove to you how diſintereſted I am. Condeſcend to direct my meaſures, to lay your commands upon me: ſhall I ſpeak Mademoiſelle? or ſhall I leave you time to examine my propoſal, to conſult yourſelf, and to determine upon the choice you may think proper to make?

Henrietta's choice was already fixed. Her extreme reluctance to a monaſtic life, did not allow her to reflect on the age of the Marquis: her education and innocence ſhut her eyes to the inconveniencies of ſo diſproportioned

oned an union: and her modeſt, but deciſive anſwer, aſſured Monſ. de Monglas of her conſent and gratitude. That very evening, being called into her father's cloſet, ſhe there with joy received orders to prepare herſelf to give her hand to the marquis: the celebration of the Marriage was fixed for the beginning of the enſuing week.

Madam de Terville with two more relations of the Count d'Alby, arrived at Chazel the moment when he was leading his daughter to the chapel of the Chateau *. Theſe ladies ſurpriſed and delighted with an event which promiſed a day of diverſion, were very forward to compliment Henrietta, and attended her to the altar. Notwithſtanding the difference of their age, Monſ. de Monglas and his young ſpouſe made no unbecoming figure in the eyes of the ſmall number of friends preſent at the ceremony.

The Marquis, who was of a good height, and perfectly well made, added to the elegance his

* The name given to the country-houſes of people of quality in France.

of his perſon, the moſt regular and agreeable features. The evenneſs of his temper, his ſimple, uniform and regular way of life, preſerved them ſtill in all their beauty. His face did not wear the traces of that premature decay of nature, ſo early engraven on the countenance of thoſe thoughtleſs young men, who before they are arrived at the time when they might enjoy life, appear already on the decline of their days. The looks of the Marquis, fixed on the amiable girl who was now become his wife, expreſſed that pure and lively joy, inſpired by the pleaſure of obliging. Mademoiſelle d'Alby diſcovered that affecting air which flows from gratitude. This ſentiment cauſes the moſt delicious ſenſations in the heart, at that happy age when pride comes not in to ſtifle it, or when we have not yet learned to leſſen the value of favours received, by humbling reflections, or by a rigid ſcrutiny into the motives of that beneficence which we are become the object of.

Part of the day was ſpent in gay rural diverſions; but towards the evening, a gloomy melancholy overſpread the countenance of

of the young Marchioneſs. She had been walking out alone, with Madam de Neuillant, one of her father's relations, who arrived that morning: this lady was become within ſix months, the widow of an old officer, infirm, tyrannical, of an amorous diſpoſition, jealous and capricious: ſhe had purchaſed the fortune ſhe then enjoyed, by eight years loathing, vexation and conſtraint. More compaſſionate than prudent, ſhe could not help pitying Madam de Monglas, and diſcovering an officious commiſeration of her future condition. She roufed the fear and curioſity of the young bride, and was indiſcreet enough to add to the one, by ſatisfying the other. Her too circumſtantial deſcriptions, alarmed the Marchioneſs; all her gay hopes of future happineſs vaniſhed in an inſtant; a horrid ſtate of ſubjection, with all its dreadful conſequences, continual importunities, unavoidable quarrels, odious ſuſpicions; no peace, no tranquillity. What a frightful proſpect! Why did not ſhe know this before! She repented, wept, afflicted herſelf immoderately: every inſtant redoubled her terror. Madam d'Alby and Madam de Terville could

could not remove her fears; and when they led her to the nuptial chamber, all their efforts to calm her troubled mind, could only draw from her a promiſe to govern herſelf, to conceal her grief, and not offend Monſ. de Monglas, by letting him ſee her fruitleſs and diſobliging regret.

Madam d'Alby was ſcarce gone out, when Henrietta, forgetting the promiſe ſhe had juſt made her, roſe precipitately, and haſtily throwing on her gown, was preparing to quit the room, the inſtant Monſ. de Monglas entered. She threw herſelf trembling on a couch; he ſat down by her, looked on her ſome time in ſilence, and ſeeing her paleneſs, perceiving trouble and fear in her eyes yet moiſtened with her tears, he took her by the hand, preſſed it, kiſſed it, and in an accent of tenderneſs and emotion; take comfort, Madam, ſaid he, take comfort for ever. You ſhall not purchaſe by a diſagreeable complaiſance, the eaſy ſituation wherein I have now placed you. In marrying you, I was not urged by the deſire of poſſeſſing a beautiful young woman, but by the deſire of making a valuable one happy.

Diſmiſs

Diſmiſs your fears, I wave my privilege as huſband: your happineſs and mine require it. The ſtruggle is doubtleſs violent. How hard to repreſs the emotions which this moment raiſes! Your charms!—an acquired right!—But by yielding to this impulſe I ſhould prepare the way to long and bitter repentance. At my years, love is accompanied with reſtleſſneſs, and with pain! the certainty of not being able to pleaſe, carries a cruel reflection to the heart; diſtruſt walks hand in hand, and frightful jealouſy treads upon its heels. Soon, tormented by ſad ſuſpicions, we afflict, we offend the object of our love, and the cauſe of our diſquiet; we make her as unhappy, and more to be pitied than ourſelves! no, my lovely Henrietta, the title of huſband, ſo neceſſary to give a ſanction to my regard for you in the eyes of the world, and to make you partake in my fortune, ſhall never induce me to trouble the ſweet tranquillity of your days. View in your huſband, a tender father, an indulgent friend: I have reſcued you from oppreſſion and tyranny: look on my houſe as a ſanctuary, where peace and liberty await you;

you; remember, when you ſhall come to inhabit it, the diſintereſted motive which engaged me to make you miſtreſs of it; be it your care to make it agreeable to yourſelf and to me; condeſcend to ſtrew ſome flowers on the winter of my life; treat with kindneſs a man capable of preferring you to himſelf; of ſparing you the importunate proofs of tenderneſs; of reſiſting the powerful impulſe of his ſenſes; of extinguiſhing in your preſence, a flame, that glows perhaps with the more ardour, as it draws nearer the period of its extinction. Yes, my dear Henrietta, I ſacrifice all my deſires to you; from this moment, I adopt the ſentiments of a father for you, and find myſelf happy in the conſideration that they will make your duty leſs irkſome, your obligations more eaſy to be diſcharged, and for ever remove from both of us the leaſt degree of miſunderſtanding or diſtaſte.

The more Madam de Neuillant's imprudent diſcourſe had alarmed Henrietta, and the more terrible it had made her huſband appear, the more agreeable was the

ſurpriſe

ſurpriſe, which this ſpeech, ſo capable of eraſing its ſad impreſſion, excited.—Tenderneſs and delight, called forth tears of comfort and joy, which bathed her face and boſom. You, my father! You my friend! You Sir! repeated ſhe, throwing herſelf into the arms of Monſ. de Monglas, and preſſing him to her breaſt with tranſport: Oh! cried ſhe, may my aſſiduities, my attentive friendſhip, my reſpect, my gratitude, convey every moment, into the ſoul of my generous friend, all that pleaſure with which his goodneſs has filled mine. Monſ. de Monglas ſpent the remaining part of the night in acquainting the Marchioneſs with the plan of life he had chalked out for himſelf. All the amuſements conſiſtent with good breeding, decorum, and family happineſs, entered into this plan formed for their common felicity. He made her ſenſible, but with caution and delicacy, how much ſhe ought to fear the expoſing to ridicule, a man who, without the allurement of a tranſient pleaſure, without paſſion, and without intereſt, had entruſted her with the power of puniſhing him for a ſtep, in which eſteem and friendſhip had engaged him.

Madam

Madam de Monglas was ſilent. Her confuſion and bluſhes did not allow her to make any anſwer; but her expreſſive looks aſſured the Marquis ſhe underſtood him. They parted ſatisfied with each other, and the contented air of Henrietta next morning, ſurprized her mother, who was uneaſy at the temper ſhe had left her in the evening before. That lady was afraid leſt Monſ. de Monglas might have had reaſon to complain of a diſinclination diſcovered ſo late, or ſhew his regret for the good he had done to the family to which he had allied himſelf, and repent with ſorrow his noble conduct towards an ungrateful woman.

Madam de Monglas gave her a faithful account of what paſſed the preceding night. The Counteſs admired the behaviour of the Marquis, and immediately after told it in confidence to Madam de Terville. After a month's ſtay at Chazel, the new-married couple returned to Paris, and the more Madam de Terville becomes acquainted with her niece's ſentiments; the more ſhe finds her delighted with her condition.

From

From Cecily to Mademoiſelle de Canteleu.

Your regard for your friend, Mademoiſelle, muſt give you a deſire to know the nature of the family, where her happy deſtiny prepares her a retreat. I will therefore add to this account, written at my return from Chazel, whither I accompanied Madam de Terville, a ſuccinct detail of what may excite your curioſity with regard to two perſons, as reſpectable by their character, as they are diſtinguiſhed by the advantages of birth and fortune.

If her diſtance from the world, and her little knowledge of its uſages or pleaſures, made her ſtay at Chazel agreeable in the eyes of Mademoiſelle d'Alby, accuſtomed to greater retirement and uniformity; the amuſements which ſhe found in her huſband's houſe, appeared very charming in the eyes of Madam de Monglas. The Marquis loved muſic, and often gave concerts. Aſſiduous in conforming herſelf to his taſte, the Marchioneſs ſent for maſters, and ſoon attained to a great perfection in the art of

of mingling the ſweet accents of a moſt melodious voice, with thoſe of the guittar, and harpſichord. A library conſiſting of the beſt authors of every nation in Europe, made her deſirous to learn ſeveral languages. Here her application filled up part of her time, gave her new ideas, and diſpelled all thoſe that might have diminiſhed her happineſs, and kept up her joy and tranquillity. The more we occupy the mind, the leſs we feel the dangerous neceſſity of finding employment for the heart.

Madam de Monglas, who has been married theſe two years, lives now as ſhe did in the firſt moments of her union with the Marquis. She keeps no open houſe, where people of rank and fortune admit indiſcriminately an impertinent croud; her toilette is not frequented by an idle ſwarm of thoſe uſeleſs and unhappy mortals, who in the morning count the tedious hours of the day, complain of their number, and lay out one part of them in contriving to ſquander the reſt.

The Marchioneſs, who is an early riſer, reads till noon; then ſhe dreſſes; at half an hour paſt one, her apartment is open when her own family, the diſtant relations of Monſ. de Monglas, with ſome choſen friends of acknowledged merit, are free to preſent themſelves, and are ſure of an agreeable reception. The care of doing the honours of an elegant and chearful table, moderate play, dramatic repreſentations, with all the little offices of ſociety: all theſe amuſements fill up her time, and make good the promiſes of M. de Monglas: he had engaged to procure her pleaſures of a leſs turbulent nature: he has called them all round her: her heart knows how to partake in their charms; and ſhe enjoys them without the leaſt alloy of unpleaſing reflections.

In order to form a juſt idea of her delightful ſituation, and to conceive her happy ſtate, we muſt, with the Marchioneſs de Monglas, preſerve in the midſt of the world, that innocence, that purity of heart, the true ſource of the tranquillity of the mind, and that calm diſpoſition which fits us at all times to taſte the ſweet impreſſions of joy.

Women

Women though born with ſenſibility, but bred up to moderate their deſires, would never feel a conſiderable part of the troubles of life, were friendſhip only to form their connexion with that violent, headſtrong ſex, who cruelly endeavour to transfuſe into our breaſts thoſe tumultuous paſſions themſelves are inflamed by. Weak, tender, too ſympathizing, whilſt we wiſh to calm theſe paſſions, we ſhare them: they deſtroy our quiet, and our happineſs: trouble, uneaſineſs, ſorrow and regret find admittance with them, into our very ſouls. May their happy deſtiny preſerve the two charming friends, whoſe peace and tranquillity I ardently wiſh, from their bad influence.

LETTER XXX.

NO, my lovely Hortenſia, nothing can weaken your title to a heart accuſtomed to love you: What, I *neglect* you; *no longer find time to write to you?* Alas! every moment in my own diſpoſal ſhall be employed in giving you proofs of my conſtant friendſhip. *Gratitude* will, doubtleſs, *attach me* to Madam de Monglas; but this juſt ſentiment ſhall never blot from my memory what I owe to my firſt friend. You ſhall never loſe that *title*, and I ſhall always take a pleaſure in preſerving it inviolate.

You are in the right to think ſo: I left the Hotel de Terville with extreme ſatisfaction. However, the Counteſs has behaved vaſtly well to me. The fear of her ſon's return, and my deſire never to ſee Monſ. de Moncenai again, induced me to feign myſelf indiſpoſed: Cecily obtained leave for me to keep my room. Sunday morning, having walked out, I was told on my return, that Madam de Terville wanted me: I immediately went to her apartment; I found her alone

alone with her daughter; ſhe made me ſit down, put on a ſmiling air, and, in an accent of raillery, chid me for having concealed my birth, my accompliſhments, *and every thing that diſtinguiſhed me from that rank in life, I had choſen to aſſume.* I bluſhed, I was afraid to anſwer; it neither became me to deſtroy nor to confirm the favourable impreſſion which Madam de Monglas doubtleſs imagined ſhe ought to give of one whom ſhe was going to make her companion. Luckily a viſit interrupted this embarraſſing converſation; I roſe with a deſign to retire; the Counteſs ſtopped me; a moment after, the houſe ſteward appeared; I would have left the room; ſhe took me by the hand, obliged me to follow her, and begged me to take my place at the table, which would have been *mine before* had I diſcovered myſelf. All dinner-time ſhe made me a thouſand kind compliments; ſhe behaved as if ſhe had never ſeen me before. So many praiſes laviſhed on the friend of Madam de Monglas; ſo many expreſſions of friendſhip ſo long delayed, might have taught me, had I yet been to learn, how little we ourſelves are concerned in what oft-

en procures us the conſideration of the world.

The careſſes of Madam de Terville had no effect on my ſenſibility, and I left Madam de Moncenai without any concern, but I regret the loſs of Cecily. We parted not without ſhedding tears; my confidence in her has not met with the like return; and I was apprehenſive of appearing indiſcreet by preſſing her too much on that ſubject. As I had been made acquainted, by her, with the character of Monſ. de Monglas, I was in hopes of a favourable reception, but little thought of meeting with ſuch an one as he was pleaſed to give me. Indeed, my friend, he did not receive me into his family as a young perſon who came to implore his aſſiſtance, or place herſelf under his protection, but as a near relation, brought up at a diſtance, whom he had long wiſhed to ſee: He did not affect any compaſſion for me, or make any profeſſions of aſſiſting me; he even ſeemed afraid to let me ſee he had been informed of my misfortune. Joy ſhone on the countenance of his charming wife: They both ſtrove to anticipate my deſires; they were attentive

tentive to the ſmalleſt objects; their kind aſſiduities have replaced me in the ſituation in which you left me: All the advantages which I felt the want of, are reſtored to me: I ought to be eaſy, contented, happy! but this ſituation, in appearance ſo like my former ſtate, is, however, not the ſame. Oh! my dear, I am altered myſelf, and ſo is every thing that concerns me.

'Till the death of Madam d'Auterive, I was wholly unacquainted with ſorrow; I had never made one melancholy reflection, nor carried my thoughts forwards into an alarming futurity: I imagined myſelf born to poſſeſs, and to preſerve the advantages I enjoyed: I knew not that being born poor and abandoned, my very exiſtence expoſed me to the neceſſity of ſuffering.——Do not accuſe me of throwing a cloud over my preſent happy condition, by the ſuggeſtions of a pride I have been ſo often reproached with: I ſhould deteſt myſelf if the favours of two worthy people lowered me but for one moment in my own eyes. Their goodneſs affects me very deeply; it does *not hurt my pride*. Believe me, my Hortenſia, my heart

is tender, grateful; I feel all the value of the favours they load me with; but ſorrow has left ſuch deep traces on my inmoſt ſoul; I am grown ſo uneaſy, I am become ſo ingenious in afflicting myſelf; ſuch dark and gloomy ideas do ſo feed my melancholy, that I can never hope to recover that tranquillity which naturally diſpoſes us to look out for amuſements, to reliſh them, or to convert them into pleaſure.

Monſ. de Germeuil writes me he is returning to Paris: He ſtops on the road at the ſeat of a relation, where his mother has promiſed to ſpend two or three days. By an odd chance I ſhall, perhaps, ſet off for Malzais the very moment when he arrives. This contrariety of our wiſhes!—But why wiſh to ſee him? What have I to ſay to him? Why am I ſo ſenſible on account of this trifling event? I fear it will give him uneaſineſs. I wrote to him yeſterday; I acquainted him with the kindneſs of Madam de Monglas; but, on reading his letter a ſecond time, one of his expreſſions made me angry, and made me tear the anſwer I had begun. Notwithſtanding his amiable qualities

ties, and his extreme generoſity of heart, M. de Germeuil is not exempt from ſome of the faults of his ſex: So much impetuoſity, ſo determined a will, ſo wrong a manner of interpreting my ſentiments!—Indeed, I could almoſt complain of him. My friendſhip alone does not content him; his is the ſource of a thouſand inquietudes, of a continual anxiety to me: Is it poſſible I ſhould ſtill perſiſt in encouraging it? I will not write to him: he will learn from Pauline where I am; and, being grown eaſy about my fate, poſſibly he may give over thinking of me.

My ſtay at Malzais, will not interrupt our correſpondence: I ſhall have your letters twice a week. Farewell, my dear, we are juſt going to the concert: Madam de Monglas deſires me to take her place at the harpſichord. I am happy in poſſeſſing talents ſhe is fond of, and in ſpeaking thoſe languages ſhe ſtudies. How much am I obliged to Madam d'Auterive for the care ſhe took of my education? Every day, every moment recalls her to my heart: In every

period of my life I ſhall cheriſh and revere her memory. But let us wave, for the preſent, this affecting ſubject; I muſt ſeem contented, and I ought to be ſo. Farewel; on my arrival at Malzais, it will be my firſt care to write to you.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

WHY do you think me *ſevere*, my dear friend; why are you afraid of letting me read the ſecrets of *a weak heart?* I have *refuſed to confeſs to you my inclination* for Monſ. de Germeuil. Refuſed! how the reproach ſtings me! no, I deſerve it not. I treated you as a ſecond ſelf, and if my ſentiments may be called a *tender inclination*, without being guilty of a reſerve, which were to ſin againſt the laws of friendſhip, *my obſtinacy in denying it*, is merely the conſequence of my ſelf-deception.

Well! and pray why is my *courageous reſiſtance* to rouſe up your ſpirit to war againſt your own inclination, and ſtand candidate for the *honours of a triumph.* To be ſerious, our ſituation in the world is too different that my example ſhould be the rule your conduct. If the loſs even of that tedious law-ſuit were to reduce you to the narroweſt circumſtances, you would have a number of advantages ſtill left you of which I am deprived. Born of noble parents, allied to illuſtrious houſes, Mademoiſelle de Can-

Canteleu never can have the ſame reaſons to *ſtifle the inclination of her heart*. Open then, that heart to me, my lovely, my dear friend; and if it is *weak*, be aſſured of all the indulgence of mine.

We have been at Malzais theſe ſix days: Monſ. and Madam de Monglas were received at this large and beautiful manor as beneficent maſters, whoſe wiſhed-for return brings joy and plenty in their train. They are in hopes, during the remaining part of the ſummer, to enjoy the ſweets of freedom and tranquillity at this ſeat: But Madam de Monglas's brothers, the Marchioneſs d'Alairac, the Count de Montalaire, his daughters, with a great deal more company, are expected towards the end of next month.

An Engliſh Gentleman, who is obliged, as I imagine, by his health, to ſpend part of the year in France, came yeſterday to take poſſeſſion of a pavilion delightfully ſolitary, and built on purpoſe for him in the center of four groves of trees, which conceal it from the view of paſſengers. His name is Lord Lindſey: The Marquis and he have been long

long acquainted; they met firſt at Conſtantinople, and travelled in company for eight years. Notwithſtanding the difference of their age, a perfect conformity of principles engages them in a ſincere friendſhip. My Lord is much younger than Monſ. de Monglas; his turn of mind is ſerious, humane, but inclined to melancholy. The uſual abode of this ſtranger, during his ſtay in France, is at three leagues diſtance from the Chateau de Malzais. It is a detached ſeat, and has but little outward appearance; the gardens are magnificent, and are kept in beautiful order, but no body is admitted into them. It might paſs for an uninhabited place, if my Lord's liberality, diffuſed all round this retreat, did not make the poor ſenſible of his preſence. His humanity makes him beloved and reſpected, even by thoſe who blame his averſion for ſociety.

If I were much addicted to vanity I ſhould be ſufficiently mortified at the impreſſion I made on him. The ſight of me raiſed in him ſurpriſe, emotion, and almoſt terror. Theſe paſſions were ſtrongly marked, without any mixture of the tender feelings; on the contrary,

trary, he ſeemed affected with ſome uneaſy ſenſation on looking at me, and yet he ſtill continued looking at me. Madam de Monglas, who had never before ſeen this friend of her huſband's, was ſtruck with this ſingularity; ſhe rallied me the whole evening upon this odd effect *of my charms*. I do not know how it happens, but I was unaccountably taken with him. I find a ſtrong propenſity to eſteem this ſtranger: His noble and majeſtic air, inſpires me with a kind of reſpect; I would not be like the perſon he hates, and ſtill leſs call back to his memory afflicting images of the paſt. Monſ. de Monglas has always known him deeply affected with ſome ſecret grief and continual melancholy; but as my Lord ſeemed to endeavour to conceal it, he never dared to aſk him the cauſe of it.

I have no letter from Monſ. de Germeuil; his ſilence aſtoniſhes me. Pauline writes me word that he is not arrived yet: She ſays he is hourly expected; perhaps I ought to anſwer him, and inform him of the happy change in my condition: my conduct to him is impolite and cruel; it will give Monſ. de Ger-

Germeuil a right to reproach me; but he is ſo accuſtomed to complain, and to be angry, that if I had written to him, I ſhould not have avoided the quarrel I look to meet. Indeed, I never open his letters without fear; and my heart beats when I think how much he muſt diſapprove of my conduct, and blame the preference I have given to the offers of Madam de Monglas, without examining whether ſtrict decency would permit me to accept of his.

Farewell, my dear, they tell me the poſt is juſt going off; I have hardly time to aſſure you, that I ſhall never alter in my eſteem for you.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

OH, my dear Hortenſia, what a dagger has juſt pierced my heart! Did you know, was you afraid to acquaint me with the marriage of Mademoiſelle de Sauve? Her mother communicates it to Monſ. de Monglas; Madam de Terville, likewiſe writes him word of it. Laſt Monday the contract was ſigned: The ceremony is to be performed in the country; the reſt I am ignorant of. My ſudden oppreſſion would not allow me to attend to the reading of thoſe letters; at the firſt words I haſtily withdrew out of the Saloon; I was ſcarce able to go up ſtairs and to reach my apartment: all trembling, diſconcerted, motionleſs, without breath, I fell on a ſopha, and loſt the uſe of my ſenſes.

Virginia, a girl who attends on me, by chance coming into my room, ſeeing me pale, my eyes cloſed, and feeling me cold and ſenſeleſs, cried out, rung, and called for help: in a moment her ſhrieks gathered a number of people about me. On the noiſe

of

of this accident my tender friends ran to my aſſiſtance: The kind aſſiduities of Monſ. de Monglas, the careſſes of the Marchioneſs, their anxious looks, their affectionate queſtions, moved me very ſenſibly; my tears at laſt found vent; the company treated the fainting fit they had ſeen me in, as the effect of vapours, occaſioned by a long ſcene of trouble; and the profuſion of my tears appeared to be the conſequence and the concluſion of that fit of melancholy.

Madam de Monglas had me put to bed; to pleaſe her I ſtaid there all the evening: It is now midnight; ſhe has juſt left me; I have ſent away Virginia; I am now riſen without noiſe, and write to you; I have much need to impart to your boſom the inſupportable grief which rends my own.

But whence proceeds my anxiety? What unreaſonable ſentiment draws theſe bitter tears from me? Have I not always conſidered Mademoiſelle de Sauve as the deſtined wife of Monſ. de Germeuil? —— But how, why does he conceal his marriage from me? I have ſo often conjured him to obey his mother!

mother! —Oh! he ſhould not have repeated, ſworn to me in all his letters, that he never would, no, never conſent.— He! my dear, He deceive me!— ſo near being another's; could he give me ſuch ſtrong aſſurances of his tenderneſs, beſeech me with ſo much ardour to approve his deſigns; to partake in his wiſhes, in his love!——Oh, good God! if I had been ſo ſeduced by his fair offers, or vain enough to indulge myſelf in ſuch flattering hopes!——But, indeed, it is a comfortable reflection not to have given way to a fooliſh confidence; or if one ſhould have been ſo weak, at leaſt, to hide one's ſhame from the world, and bluſh inwardly.

But what intereſt can Monſ. de Monglas take in this event? Does he know the Marquis de Germeuil? Is Mademoiſelle de Sauve his relation by blood or marriage? Theſe letters overjoyed him. Should I be ſo unfortunate as to ſee the Marquis de Germeuil arrive here!——But, now I recollect, the day when I informed Madam de Monglas of my ſad adventure, ſhe congratulated herſelf on not being intimately connected with any of the heirs of Madam d'Auterive: perhaps

ſome

ſome body elſe is going to marry Mademoiſelle de Sauve.— O my dear, ſhould I be ſo happy! — Oh, Hortenſia, whither do my thoughts wander? But what advantage could I promiſe myſelf from Mademoiſelle de Sauve's marrying ſome friend of Monſ. de Monglas? Is the ſorrow which oppreſſes me excited by an unjuſt jealouſy? Have I indulged myſelf in a wiſh to enjoy the poſſeſſion deſtined for Mademoiſelle de Sauve, when I have refuſed it myſelf? Shall I be mean enough to envy it her? Oh! let her poſſeſs the Marquis, and may joys and pleaſures be the lot of the happy companion of Monſ. de Germeuil! may delight, may felicity mark every moment of their lives!——No, I did not believe him capable of this uſeleſs, this blame-worthy diſſimulation: Why thoſe reiterated entreaties to quit the Hotel de Terville, to retire into the country, or go into a convent? Oh, what is it to him where my unfortunate days run out, or where I terminate a troubled and wretched life.

But I give way to my grief; my eyes, fatigued and heavy, force me to lay down my pen. I will try to compoſe myſelf, to become

become miſtreſs of my reaſon, that I may give no more uneaſineſs to thoſe friends who honour me with ſo true an affection. Farewell, my dear, may you never undergo the torments which a ſtate of uncertainty throws us into, or the ſtill greater of awakening to a certainty of evil.

LET-

LETTER XXXIII.

EVERY thing clears up, my dear; it is not Monſ. de Germeuil, it is—I can ſcarcely yet perſuade myſelf; it is the Marquis de Terville who marries Mademoiſelle de Sauve. Before ſhe gave a poſitive anſwer, Madam de Sauve inſiſted that the young Marquis ſhould purchaſe a place at court. There fell out a very ſuitable one to be ſold. Monſ. de Monglas aſked the refuſal of it, obtained it, and was ſo good as to lend the Counteſs de Terville part of the ſum neceſſary for the purchaſe of it. This loan was the important ſervice which made Madam de Monglas ſo ſure of her aunt's compliance, when ſhe was pleaſed to ask me of her.

I bluſh at my ſuſpicions; I am aſhamed of my weakneſs; and ſtill more ſo of my injuſtice. I repent that I communicated to you my falſe conjectures. Could I poſſibly think ſo ill of Monſ. de Germeuil? forget in an inſtant his noble frankneſs, the amiable candor of his ſoul. A heart like his, can it

diſſemble? Alas! his attachment for me is but too ſincere, too tender, too conſtant! whither will this inclination carry him, fatal to his quiet, to his happineſs? He has rejected that alliance, ſo much deſired by his mother, and by all the relations of Mademoiſelle de Sauve.—Oh, my God, if that mother enraged at him!—Hortenſia, his very declaration of love afflicts me: his paſſion makes me the diſpoſer of his fate, and I in return can bring him nothing but inconvenience, or grief.

Ingenious in tormenting myſelf, I perhaps give way to frivolous fears. Since my coming to Malzais, Monſ. de Germeuil has never written to me. Pauline has been ſeveral times at the hotel de Terville, without finding any letters for me. Who employs his thoughts ſo much in the country? —He begins to neglect me; his reaſon, doubtleſs, bids him forget me, renounce his projects, and overcome a paſſion ſo contrary to his peace of mind. Well! why ſhould he preſerve it, whilſt I myſelf endeavour to deſtroy it; whilſt honour engages me to uſe

a thouſand efforts to make him forget me?

Madam de Monglas has received your letter with an extreme ſenſibility; you will find by her obliging anſwer, how well ſhe remembers her firſt affections. I every day diſcover new qualities in her; ſhe grows very dear to me, and Monſ. de Monglas inſpires me with that reſpect, that tender and filial veneration which I once felt for Madam d'Auterive. Pleaſure and liberty reign here; the eaſy chearfulneſs of the maſter and miſtreſs is diffuſed over all who ſurround them: they delight in making others happy, and fortune has ſupplied them with the power of indulging ſo noble a diſpoſition.

You deſire to know whether Lord Lindſey ſtill continues uneaſy at ſeeing me. No, on the contrary he appears very much pleaſed with my company. I often meet him in my morning walks; his converſation is amuſing and engaging; I hope to improve by his extenſive knowlege in order to complete that courſe of ſtudy into which Madam d'Auterive had initiated me.

I cannot

I cannot conceive how that nobleman deſtined by his birth and by his diſtinguiſhing talents to fill the higheſt poſts in his country, came to embrace a voluntary baniſhment, and ſtill continues to make but unfrequent and ſhort journeys thither; he is twenty years younger than Monſ. de Monglas, and is maſterof an immenſe fortune; his perſon is graceful and noble; he poſſeſſes every advantage one can covet, or envy. What then is it that can afflict him? Do not figure to yourſelf that Lord Lindſey is either *gloomy*, or *unſociable*: if he flies from ſociety, it is without hating it, and without loſing any of thoſe accompliſhments that are derived from it. Madam de Monglas, ſomewhat prepoſſeſſed againſt a nation unhappily too often at war with our own, is ſurpriſed to ſee this nobleman ſo attentive to entertain and amuſe her, and to find him totally devoid of all thoſe ridiculous prejudices, which give birth to ſo many falſe ideas, and ſo much real antipathy. It is eaſy to perceive that he is not happy; but his extreme politeneſs, his wit, his complaiſance, render his melancholy intereſting; it inſpires every body with a deſire to

divert

divert him from it, while it is ſo tempered as not to throw the leaſt gloom over the company.

Monſ. de Monglas diverts himſelf with making him gueſs, whether I am Engliſh or Italian; he gives into the jeſt, but certainly I do not ſpeak theſe two languages well enough to raiſe any doubt in him, notwithſtanding he complaiſantly affects one.

By delaying the confidence you promiſed to repoſe in me, you redouble my uneaſineſs. In ſpite of theſe auſtere maxims, which you ſeem to reproach me with, be well aſſured, my dear Hortenſia, that my heart will ſhare every ſentiment of yours.

LETTER XXXIV.

WHAT! my tender friend, could you conceal ſo long from me the ſecret of your heart? You *dreaded my ſuperior judgment.* I ſhould have very little, if I were capable of heightening your ſorrows by uſeleſs *remonſtrances.* I conceive your difficulties; I feel them; I pity you, and weep with you. But is there no way to ſoften matters, to alter this perplexing and diſagreeable ſituation of affairs. Is it impoſſible to bring about a compromiſe? Have you never thought of it? Is there no way of ſubduing your couſin's obſtinacy, and the poſitive humour of the old Count de Melville? Do you know no body whoſe credit, addreſs or friendſhip is able to conciliate their minds and unite their affections.

But pray, how long has the Marquis de Melville been at Roan? Where did you ſee him? At whoſe houſe did you begin this fatal acquaintance? How came he to be ſo often in your company, and to inſpire you with

with ſo warm a regard? With *ſo many aſſurances of his eſteem*, have you none of a more pleaſing diſtinction? You are *not beloved!* Who you, my dear! I can hardly perſuade myſelf of it.

If you do not flatter Monſ. de Melville; if he is ſuch as you repreſent him, he cannot be inſenſible to charms and qualities ſo capable of affecting a man who thinks. Why does he purſue you? Why does he *almays ſeek you out?* He *ſays nothing* to you; *he caſts his eyes on the ground*; *he dares not approach you*; he ſeems to *fear you*, and you ſuſpect that *he hates you?* He may fear you, my dear, but ſurely he does not hate you. The preſent circumſtances render his conduct natural enough. As you have both the ſame claim to the eſtate in litigation, he muſt look on you as an enemy. Your every wiſh is in appearance to deprive him of his fortune. How ſhould he penetrate to the bottom of your heart? One of the two *muſt inevitably ruin the other*; ſad and cruel dilemma! how diſagreeable it is to derive one's hope of happineſs from the ruin

of a perſon, whoſe intereſt we prefer to our own advantage.

But why ſhould you not avail yourſelf of the vacation time, to employ the mediation of a friend? Doubtleſs it is *not fitting* you ſhould ſeem to wiſh for a compromiſe, ſince *your union with Monſ. de Melville, can alone promote it*; I approve your delicacy. How uneaſy is your ſituation! how it moves me! how it pierces my heart!——Alas! whither has the time fled, the happy time, when we were wholly unacquainted with theſe continual vexations; when every day promiſed us amuſements and pleaſure; when all our hours paſſed over unmarked by fears, fruitleſs deſires, or gloomy reflexions.

Let me place before your eyes the motives of conſolation I ſhould adopt in the ſame circumſtances? On a ſuppoſition you ſhould loſe your law-ſuit, the fortune now under litigation will be adjudged to him, whom you now fear to deprive of it; would not this be a mitigation of your misfortune? But if the deciſion is favourable, what

what joy will it be to offer to partake it with him. His father's anger is a tranſient ſentiment, excited by intereſt, which you need not fear. The Count only deſires to ſecure to his ſon thoſe lands which you claim; it will be indifferent to him, whether he obtains them by a decree of the court, or by a junction of your hands. Do not ſuffer yourſelf to be caſt down, pluck up your ſpirits, the iſſue is uncertain, and perhaps may be an happy one. May it anſwer all the wiſhes of the affectionate and generous ſoul of my dear friend.

I cannot anſwer your queſtions in regard to Monſ. de Germeuil; he has not written to me. I confeſs, his ſilence aſtoniſhes me. It was my duty to wiſh, and perhaps I was really deſirous not to occupy his thoughts ſo much, but I never could endure to reflect without uneaſineſs, at being entirely forgotten by him: I imagined that a friendſhip congenial with our reaſon—— I will not examine the conduct of the Marquis de Germeuil: poſſibly he may complain of mine; poſſibly too, he may not

have obſerved my want of punctuality. And, why ſhould he think of me; why ſhould he entertain a fruitleſs paſſion? What pleaſure can it afford him? Can the infrequent and reſerved aſſurances of my eſteem, give him any comfort, or find a place amidſt ſo many diſſipations and pleaſures, to which his youth, rank and fortune intitle him? The mind muſt be in a ſtate of ſadneſs; muſt itſelf ſtand in need of comfort, before we can experience any ſatisfaction in receiving letters from a friend, and in reading them over a thouſand times with ſympathetic feelings, and emotions. I ſhould be very cruel indeed were I to wiſh Monſ. de Germeuil, in ſuch a ſituation of mind, as to render him incapable of taſting more ſatisfactory enjoyments.

No, I have not altered my idea of Lord Lindſey. He is always extremely obliging to me; the more his heart opens, the more his temper is known, the more worthy we find him to inſpire a ſolid and laſting friendſhip. He amuſes himſelf with inſtructing me in the properties of plants. This

ſtudy

ſtudy fills up thoſe hours of the morning, which Madam de Monglas dedicates to her houſhold cares. Farewell, my dear; I ſay with you, why are we ſeparated? There are moments when we could wiſh to mingle our tears.

LETTER XXXV.

NO, my dear, never ſhall I recover that internal peace, which made me ſo happy during the life of Madam d'Auterive: every thing ſeemed to promiſe it me here, but my hopes are vaniſhed: I begin to fear angering and diſpleaſing my obliging friends, by ſhewing how far I am from reliſhing the ſchemes they have adopted for my advantage; how impoſſible it will be to fall in with their notions, and to place my felicity, in that ſplendid rank, which they have in view and are projecting for me.

For ſome days paſt, Lord Lindſey is become the ſubject of a conſtant altercation, between Madam de Monglas and me: raillery makes the diſpute ſtill ſupportable, but our opinions are ſo contrary, and our views ſo different, that the ſweetneſs of our correſpondence may become gradually altered by it.

Monſ.

Monſ. de Monglas, by obſtinately declining to diſcover my country, has very naturally raiſed his friend's curioſity in regard to the place of my nativity, and the Marchioneſs diverts herſelf with encreaſing it, by giving him a kind of hint of the ſingularity of my fortune: at preſent ſhe aſſigns a particular motive for the inquiſitiveneſs ſhe has given birth to; ſhe attributes to a *very warm* concern, his ſimple deſire of diving into a myſtery; perhaps that of diſcovering a country-woman, in the young perſon, whom the partiality of her friends repreſents as worthy of his eſteem.

His aſſiduity, his complaiſance for me, are the objects of our whole converſation, and of a thouſand perplexing ſuppoſitions. The active friendſhip of Madam de Monglas fills her imagination with the moſt pleaſing images; ſhe is inceſſantly talking to me of rank and fortune; ſhe chides me very ſeriouſly, for liſtening to her with indifference, and I ſee how I ſhould be blamed if ſuch fantaſtic ideas had any real foundation: would they forgive me the refuſing

ſuch weighty advantages, when they even blame me for not deſiring them?

I reproach myſelf for a want of confidence, ſincerity, and juſtice: I could have wiſhed my heart had been more open with Madam de Monglas. When I acquainted her with my forlorn ſituation, I did not intend at firſt to diſguiſe any thing from her; but I know not what ſecret confuſion ſuppreſſed the name of M. de Germeuil on my lips; ought not I to have diſtinguiſhed him from thoſe whoſe unfeeling behaviour I experienced? Why be ſilent on the nobleneſs of his character? Why not ſpeak of his generous offers? If the fear of apearing either too vain, or too credulous, obliged me to keep ſilence as to his intentions, ſhould I have concealed likewiſe his aſſiduities, his friendſhip, his repeated endeavours to make me accept of his preſents? How could I be ſo ungrateful as to be aſhamed of his goodneſs, or not dare to avow it?

This imprudent reſerve leaves me without an anſwer, and without any reaſonable objection to theſe notions of Madam de Monglas;

glas: it would make my conduct appear very ſtrange in her ſight, if any propoſal from my Lord Lindſey ſhould oblige me to declare my ſentiments. Can titles and riches dazzle me? Oh, my dear, that hand which Monſ. de Germeuil has deigned to aſk, ſhall never be given to any man. I have promiſed him to live unengaged; neither fortune nor grandeur ſhall make me break that voluntary promiſe: Alas! what are all the riches in the world, if we do not deſire them?

A moderate ſhare of thoſe envied riches, would be ſufficient to gratify the wiſhes of my heart. It is long ſince I have determined on the ſtate I would wiſh to live in. I cannot put my ſcheme in execution without aſſiſtance; I once hoped to obtain it from the goodneſs of Madam de Monglas: Being an hundred times on the point of communicating my deſigns to her, I was deterred by her known averſion to a convent: I feared her remonſtrances, and even her reproaches; to deſire to leave her, were

it

it not to repay with ingratitude all her ſolicitude to make me happy?

The little debate, which my Lord Lindſey occaſions between the Marchioneſs and myſelf, does not in the leaſt alter my firſt friendſhip: the conduct of that worthy man, gives no ſigns of the change they imagine they obſerve in him; his melancholy is not diminiſhed; ſighs often eſcape from him, and ſometimes I ſee the tears ready to fall from his eyes; it is true, he pays me the moſt attentive affection; but his conduct is equal, and without emotion or paſſion; I could call it, my dear, a paternal affection, if I underſtood the force and extent of a ſentiment, which my misfortune has condemned me never to inſpire.

You beg me to *talk to you of myſelf alone*, never to *recal to your memory the confidence you have repoſed in me*, you wiſh *never to mention Monſ. de Melville any more*. By laying yourſelf under this reſtraint, do you imagine you can baniſh him from your heart?

Believe

Believe me, my good friend, it is difficult, and even impoſſible to blot out a pleaſing impreſſion: we may keep our ſentiments to ourſelves, but to deſtroy them, the very attempt to do it——Oh! it is a very cruel, and a very uſeleſs endeavour.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

Ten in the morning.

THE profound calm that reigns around, invites me in vain to taſte the ſweets of ſleep which cloſes every eye in this beautiful and peaceful abode: why am I the only one, whom vexation, and uneaſineſs keep awake? why cannot I partake of that reſt, which univerſal nature ſeems to enjoy.

Oh! my dear, my own imprudence throws me into bitter regret. Could you have thought it? Monſ. de Germeuil dares to abuſe the regard I imagined I owed to the nephew of Madam d'Auterive: for a long time paſt, his complaints afflict, and his reproaches hurt me. ——— Once indeed, he ſays, *he kept within bounds*; he avoided to *diſpleaſe and offend me*; but now my cruelty will no longer ſuffer him to *conſtrain* himſelf, and certainly he does not: he breaks out into paſſion, he threatens, he gives

gives himſelf up to the greateſt impetuoſity. —How his temper is altered!

I deſerved the mortification I meet with; a too fond lover of myſelf, made me fear to loſe the friendſhip of Monſ. de Germeuil, and induced me to keep up a commerce I ought to have ended: it was not intereſt that ſeduced, nor ambition that dazzled me; I have refuſed very advantageous offers, and could not forego the pleaſure of a dangerous correſpondence. Oh! would I had never written to Monſ. de Germeuil.

Through the blunder of a Valet, his letter dated from Bayeux remained for twelve days at the hotel de Terville; if I were to ſend you, and were you to read that letter. —He deſired to *obey me*, he ſays, and *to forget me!* to obtain this *victory of his reaſon*, to accuſtom his heart no longer to cheriſh ſentiments, *which I take a pleaſure in making ſo tormenting:* this painful, this fruitleſs attempt, *warns him to make no more*; born to adore me, *he will not live without me*, nor *will ever renounce me.* He *will* ſee me, he *will* ſpeak

ſpeak to me. I ſhall not *deprive him* of a pleaſure ſo long wiſhed for. He returns to all his old ſchemes, which I have ſo often rejected. If I *perſiſt* in living at Madam de Moncenai's, he will come there to me; he will let her know his love for an *ungrateful woman*, he will no longer conceal his deſigns; *he himſelf will acquaint his mother, his relations, and friends with them: he foreſees the conſequences of ſuch an eclat, but he views them without emotion.* By a voluntary renunciation of that part of the fortune, which I intended to preſerve for him, he will diſpel my vain apprehenſions; I *ſhall no longer keep him in a cruel uncertainty.* What objections can I make, after his ſentiments are publicly known? After ſo many proofs *of my tender, my generous friendſhip, he would bluſh to think but for one moment that his happineſs gives me no concern; that I am not diſpoſed to accompliſh the wiſhes of a man whoſe moſt ardent deſire is to diffuſe happineſs over my life, to owe his felicity to me, and to be eternally employed in promoting mine.*

In a cruel uncertainty, how the expreſſion ſurpriſes me!—Have I, my Hortenſia, kept

Monſ. de Germeuil in uncertainty? He *would bluſh to think*.—I ought to be *diſpoſed*.—What does he preſume to think? Oh! my dear, I find I am humbled; I can never forgive myſelf.—I bluſh inwardly.—And yet, what can I reproach myſelf with?

Four in the morning.

I ſtrive in vain to calm myſelf: my imagination wanders over a thouſand melancholy objects. I reſume my pen, it is ſome eaſe to my heart to pour forth its troubles into yours. Oh! you are quite in the right, my dear, to conceal very carefully, from Monſ. de Melville, the emotion which his preſence throws you into: the men abuſe our ſincerity, our complaiſance, and our friendſhip. What right has Monſ. de Germeuil over me? How comes he to ſuppoſe that by *declaring his intentions*, he will remove all the obſtacles I oppoſe to his deſires? Does this *generous* friendſhip ſubject me to his laws, make me the ſlave to his will? He *fears not the conſequences of the diſcovery* he threatens me with: imprudent man! he neither

neither ſees, nor conſiders any thing but himſelf. Could he form the cruel deſign of baniſhing me from the hotel de Terville; of expoſing me to the reſentment of his mother, and in my diſtreſs, of leaving me naught but the humbling reſource of living on his favours, or daring by a bold and raſh ſtep, to aſſume the title of Marchioneſs de Germeuil, with the reputation of an intereſted girl, ungrateful enough to carry ſorrow into a houſe, in which ſhe ſaw herſelf cheriſhed, to forget that Madam d'Auterive brought her up, and gave her principles capable of making her ever revere all who had any connection with her, and every object that may recal her to her thoughts.

My God, how ſhould I have been terrified on receiving that letter at the hotel de Terville! to dread every moment to ſee Monſ. de Germeuil entering Madam de Moncenaï's cloſet, to hear him claim me, as belonging to him, as an unconſtant capricious young woman, who wanted to withdraw herſelf from that ſway which ſhe herſelf had given him over her. How could I have anſwered ſuch a violent, paſſionate letter?—

ter?—Oh, it is he himſelf, who treats me with ſo much harſhneſs.—It matters not, I will not break the law I have impoſed on myſelf; I will hold my peace; I will not wilfully diſoblige the nephew of Madam d'Auterive; an eternal ſilence ſhall prove to him that my deſign is not to keep him in *a cruel uncertainty*.

Seven in the morning.

I have been reading this ſtrange letter over again, and perhaps with too much indulgence. Monſ. de Germeuil's impetuoſity vexes me, but his ſentiments move me, and his intentions inſpire me with gratitude. If our fortunes were equal, his paſſionate expreſſions, his vivacity, his ardour, would ſeem more adapted to perſuade, than to anger me. But ſo many unfortunate circumſtances keep us aſunder; he has ſo many advantages over me!—But this very circumſtance ſeems to require more delicacy, in his conduct to me? Ought he to have threatened me with a diſcovery, have given

given me up to the reproaches of my heart? Can I ſupport the idea of ſeeing him flatter himſelf—What! can the aſſurances of an innocent friendſhip induce him to believe.—He thinks me *diſpoſed*.—Does He, my dear, does He tell me ſo?—But I abuſe your goodneſs; my long ſorrowful letters fatigue you. Pardon me the irkſomeneſs they give you. Your kind complaiſance has too much accuſtomed me to ſeek for conſolation by writing to you. Have you not vexations enough of your own, How can I be ſo unjuſt as to compel you to partake in mine.

LET-

LETTER XXXVII.

WITH what a pleaſing joy do you fill my heart! What, my dear, that worthy magiſtrate whom your couſin deſigned for your huſband, the innocent cauſe of your diſputes with her, is actually in the confidence of Monſ. de Melville? *He is your friend!* I admire his noble diſintereſtedneſs. Well, my dear Hortenſia, you muſt acknowledge at laſt, how little juſtice you did yourſelf, in doubting the affection of your lover. The influence of the Preſident d'Arclai over the mind of the Count de Melville, will ſhortly put an end to that long proceedure, by an eaſy accommodation, and the union of the two heirs, is ſo proper, that your heart may ſafely indulge the charms of hopes.

If I anſwer the tender article which concludes your letter, I fear to anger you: I fear ſtill more to blend a ſentiment of grief with thoſe pleaſing emotions that muſt

affect you: but, can I diſſemble the true diſpoſitions of my ſoul, or encourage you in a deceitful expectation. Oh, my dear, when *I promiſed you to live with you*, to accept *a retreat with you*, it was at the abbey of Panthemon, where you propoſed we ſhould retire together; circumſtances are no longer the ſame; pardon me, if I tell you that at preſent it is impoſſible for me to fulfill that *engagement*, which you mention to me with ſo much zeal and goodneſs.

The ſituation of my mind removes me more than ever from this brilliant ſociety, with which I have no ſort of tie. Does the condition I am in anſwer to my fortune? This borrowed luſtre draws peoples eyes too much on me, raiſes too much curioſity; my every taſte, deſire, or inclination, lead towards ſolitude. *You will not be happy, till you receive from my hand the confirmation of my promiſe.* Oh! allow me to perſuade myſelf you will be happy by the certainty of making me ſo, fixing my ſituation, rendering me independent, and baniſhing for ever all fear and uneaſineſs from the heart of your friend.

If the ſucceſs of Monſ. d'Arclai's aſſiduities anſwer his wiſhes, before the Marquis de Melville becomes maſter of your fortune, I will preſume to aſk, and to hope a favour from you.——Your ſenſible heart will poſſibly be moved in granting it me. I will beg of you my dear, to procure me admittance into that convent, where ever ſince the death of Madam d'Auterive, I wiſh to dedicate my days, in ſeeking that peace, that calm which I cannot recover in the world. Be not caſt down, my lovely Hortenſia, be not hurt with my reſolution; I have not taken it precipitately: if you impartially examine all the motives which determine me to form this deſign, you will agree, that both my condition and reflections ought naturally to inſpire me with the deſire of an eternal retreat; but I will not dwell on that ſubject, it will be time enough to reſume it after your intereſting affairs are ended.

You do not think me *indulgent enough* to Monſ. de Germeuil: you pity him; alas! ſo do I. I have received three letters from him;

him; they are very different from the firſt: he conjures me to forgive him thoſe expreſſions *fallen from him in the bitterneſs of his heart*; he begs, he urges, *he implores my goodneſs*; my ſilence *drives him to deſpair*; *on his knees* he requeſts *one line, one ſingle line from my hand.* But how can I write even that one line, without drawing on me new reproaches, or expoſing myſelf to new ſolicitations? I would not wiſh to give him hopes, I would not wiſh to afflict him.—How affecting are his laſt letters! what ſighs, what tears have they coſt me!——There are moments in which theſe tears flow ſpontaneouſly; when I am pleaſed in ſhedding them; when the paſſionate ſentiments of Monſ. de Germeuil charm all the torments of my ſoul; when I perceive it expand itſelf to I know not what ſad but affecting pleaſure: its ſoothing impreſſion removes for a time the remembrance of the cauſes of our ſeparation. Oh, my dear, birth and riches are great, are real advantages! If I poſeſſed them, how eaſy it would be for me to write to Monſ. de Germeuil?

I have

I have this moment received a note from Pauline; it gives me extreme uneaſineſs. She informs me that Monſ. de Germeuil muſt be by this time at a friend's houſe, about eight or ten leagues from Malzais: he mentions nothing of it; why this miſterioufneſs? Can it be his intention to come here? would he expoſe me to a ſurprize, and to the confuſion, which the ſight of him, and the ſecrecy I have obſerved, in regard to our connexions, muſt throw me into? O never could his arrival in the neighbourhood of Malzais more alarm me! It is whiſpered about, amongſt the people of faſhion here that Lord Lindſey is going to marry the ward of Monſ. de Monglas. By giving me that name, the Marquis has raiſed ſuch an opinion of my fortune, as to attract the notice of a lady, who wants to marry her ſon. On the firſt overture of her propoſal, Madam de Monglas, being unwilling to enter into any particulars, told her I was engaged, and was ſatisfied with *my guardian's* choice. Doubtleſs, his Lordſhip's aſſiduities muſt have awakened the ſuſpicions of that lady, and as ſhe is fond of ſeeming to know

all that paſſes round her eſtate, ſhe muſt have given her conjectures as real matter of fact.

Good God, if this rumour ſhould come to the ears of Monſ. de Germeuil? if he imagined but for a moment.——Oh! I could never bear to raiſe a jealous emotion in his heart. What! deliver him over to the dreadful torments I felt? What tears, what groans, muſt it coſt him! His boſom would be rent by thoſe pointed ſtings, which the idea of his marriage with Mademoiſelle de Sauve——This confeſſion ſurprizes you, my dear; you have often reproached me with *concealing* my ſentiments: but be well aſſured that when I concealed my ſentiments from you, it was becauſe I knew them not. In the ſpace of one night only, my cruel pangs taught me to diſtinguiſh from friendſhip, thoſe tumultuous agitations to which its milder affection is a ſtranger: I diſcovered at the bottom of my ſoul, that dangerous, that violent paſſion, whoſe force and effects you have ſo often deſcribed to me. While I reproach myſelf with my own weakneſs, why ſhould I diſſemble it to you. Far, far from me be

all

all affectation, all voluntary reserve. Monſ. de Germeuil is dear to me; I love, I will love him all my life: I dare tell it my indulgent friend, and perhaps, one day, I may dare ſtill more. When the ſacred and indiſſoluble bonds of religion ſhall free me from the fear of ever yielding to the prayers of Monſ. de Germeuil; I will tell him, yes, I will tell him then, it is not an *ungrateful* an *inflexible* girl, whom you love; but an unfortunate one, whoſe ſenſible and tender heart ſympathized in all your ſentiments, your wiſhes, and your deſires! Do not pity her, becauſe ſhe leaves the world, becauſe ſhe renounces all the goods of fortune, and every pleaſure of life; but pity her becauſe ſhe could not make you happy!

LETTER XXXVIII.

MAdam de Monglas has juſt made me a very aſtoniſhing requeſt. I can hardly recover the uneaſineſs it gives me. Reaſons, ſhe tells me, *of a very forcible nature*, induce Monſ. de Monglas to aſk my leave to inform Lord Lindſey of all that concerns myſelf. *He does not require this complaiſance of me*, he only *earneſtly wiſhes it*; he will be *grateful* for this proof of my eſteem for a friend *whom the moſt tender concern* alone engages *to wiſh to be acquainted with my ſtory*. That he may be the more thoroughly informed, they wiſh to read to him the little packet of Madam d'Auterive, and even the extract of the letters to Mr. Smith.

Will my ſituation in regard to Monſ. and Madam de Monglas, allow me to oppoſe their deſires? To *aſk*, my dear, is in reality to require it. Ever ready to ſatisfy the Marquis, I have ſent an expreſs to Paris; he conveys my keys to Pauline, with an order to carry thoſe papers to the Hotel de Monglas, and to deliver them to him.

But

But why ſhould Monſ. de Monglas deſire to entruſt to his friend the ſad particulars which regard me? Why expoſe to his view misfortunes foreign to him, and an adventure rather horrible than intereſting? Why unveil my condition, and my diſtreſs, to render me the object of his compaſſion, and convert into pity his eſteem and regard?—What empty pride ſtill troubles my afflicted heart? How can I be affected by the conſequences of this confidence? I might bluſh at being poor and unknown, when being informed of Madam d'Auterive's intentions with regard to myſelf, and her amiable nephew, I looked on my fate as an unſurmountable barrier between Monſ. de Germeuil and myſelf. Oh! but for him; but for his love; leſs ſenſible to misfortune, more reaſonable, more ſubmiſſive to the decrees of providence, I ſhould have born, without murmuring, and perhaps without grief, the humble condition to which I was reduced: but how could I avoid lamenting it, ſince it placed me at ſuch a diſtance from him; ſince it forced me to conceal from him all the ſentiments of a heart——I am interrupted.——It is a letter from you.——You ſurpriſe me, my dear Hortenſia; you give me the moſt exquiſite un-

eaſineſs. Monſ. d'Arclai, you tell me, is juſt ſet off for the Chateau de Melville; his firſt letter will *let you know the ſucceſs of his negotiation*; and you expect, *without any great impatience*, ſo important a piece of news? Your *deareſt hope is vaniſhed*, and your *ideas of happineſs are at preſent confined within too narrow a compaſs to ſatisfy your heart.*

Oh, good God! my dear friend, whence ariſes this indifference; ſo ſudden, ſo ſtrange, ſo little natural, on an occaſion which is to decide intereſts of ſuch high concern? I dare not form conjectures on a change wherein I diſcover neither your uſual *character* nor ſentiments. After ſo long a ſilence, why does my dear friend write to me with a premeditated deſign not to be underſtood? The oftener I read that ſhort, and peeviſh letter, the leſs am I able to conceive.—In the name of that ſincere and tender friendſhip which always united our hearts and minds, which is become the only conſolation of my life; explain to me the cauſe of this proceeding; it afflicts me more than I can poſſibly expreſs.

LET-

LETTER XXXIX.

THE ſight of your letter gave me the greateſt emotion; I hoped, I feared; my hand trembled while I broke it open: the moſt real pleaſure ſoon diſpelled my anxiety. But how ſurpriſing to ſee you paſs with ſo much rapidity, over a ſubject ſo affecting to you, and ſo flattering to your friend. This ſingularity ſtruck me. What! ſaid I, my dear Hortenſia dares not acquaint me with her felicity? *In two month's time an happy marriage eſtabliſhes her fortune:* Her wiſhes are accompliſhed; ſhe writes me ſo; *ſhe is eager to acquaint me with it,* and that in the compaſs of three lines: ſhe informs me of her happineſs, as if it were an event wherein I took little or no concern. I read theſe firſt lines many times over; aſtoniſhed, ſpeechleſs, a thouſand confuſed ideas ſtopped me; I could not go on. What emotion, what ſympathetic feelings, what ſadneſs did the ſequel occaſion.

Is it, then, I who diſturb your joy? who *throw a cloud over the ſmiling proſpect on which*

you

you began to fix your view. Oh, my companion! my ſiſter! tell me not; no, never, that my retirement would *embitter your whole life.* Need I recall to your memory all the motives which render it neceſſary, and even indiſpenſable? How can you term this choice *a ſad ſacrifice?* And what, pray, is the *ſacrifice* I offer up? What can I pretend to in this wide univerſe? What bleſſing has futurity in ſtore for me? From my birth, doomed to a life of dependance and humiliation, the cloiſter offers me, at leaſt, the appearance of equality: my eyes will not be hurt there with ſhocking compariſons; no titles, no diſtinctions in the monaſtic life, which extinguiſhes ambition, annihilates hope, deſtroys the love of ourſelves, and, doubtleſs, the reliſh for thoſe connexions ſo painful to keep up, and ſo difficult to break.

You aſk me whether I think of Monſ. de Germeuil; *of the mortal pangs with which this cruel ſtep will pierce his heart!* What a queſtion, Hortenſia! Oh! I do certainly think of him: Monſ. de Germeuil is very dear to me: the dart which *pierces his heart*, will break my own: But, can I avoid cauſing him

him a violent affliction, or laſting uneaſineſs? In the preſent ſituation, the meaſure which is attended with no diſagreeable conſequences to him, appears to me the moſt eligible. He will be *greatly affected with the loſs of me*, it will *coſt him tears*; I fear it will; but time will mitigate his ſorrow: the veil, like death, buries us in oblivion; the remembrance of me will be eraſed from his thoughts; he will recover that peace of mind which I have too long deprived him of; and perhaps myſelf, proſtrate before the altar, where my prayers ſhall be offered up for him, may feel the return of my wonted calm, by the conſciouſneſs of having tried every method of procuring his happineſs.

When you repreſent to me how agreeable my ſituation in the world would be if I conſented to live with you, or at leaſt *to divide myſelf between Madam de Monglas and you!* I might repeat your own queſtion, my dear, and aſk, whether you think of Monſ. de Germeuil? You do not know the inexpreſſible torment of rejecting, inceſſantly, the prayers of a man whoſe wiſhes we would be glad

glad to gratify; of forming a continual oppoſition to his deſires; of reſolving to appear *cruel, inflexible, ungrateful!* of ſuffering him to impute to *obſtinacy, coldneſs and indifference*, every ſacrifice ſo difficultly made to his intereſt, advancement and glory: of ſaying to one's ſelf, he whom I love is not happy, while it is me whom he accuſes of all the torments of his heart. Believe me, Hortenſia, it is a ſtate of violence; it afflicts, and overpowers us; a tender ſoul cannot bear it.

No, my generous friend, I ſhall not urge you in regard to the favour you grant me with ſo noble a reluctance: I ſhall wait, in order to claim your obliging promiſe, the time when Madam de Monglas is ready to leave Malzais. I am very far from viewing, without regret, the moment when I am to part from her.

It looks as if fortune, at continual enmity with my wiſhes, preſided over every event wherein I am intereſted. If the deciſion of your affairs had preceded my meeting with, and experiencing the goodneſs of the Marchioneſs,

chioneſs, I ſhould have had one attachment leſs to the world. How can I ceaſe to love Madam de Monglas? or think, without ſorrow, of ſeeing her no more? How can I help fearing to excite her ſorrow, and to interrupt for a ſingle moment the ſweet compoſure of her ſoul, and the real happineſs ſhe enjoys? I have a thouſand times wiſhed ſhe never had honoured me with ſo tender an affection.— Alas! my dear, it is my lot to appear ungrateful to all who love me.

Pardon that *conſtant oppoſition to your advice* which you complain of. An unfortunate chain of circumſtances would never permit me to follow your counſel: I did not dare to truſt your tender partiality: that reaſon which you term *auſtere*, was all I could rely on to guide me in the difficult road where my ſtate of dereliction and poverty have obliged me to walk: My care to preſerve my own eſteem, has determined all my ſteps; and even to the laſt moment of my life I ſhall applaud myſelf for never having preferred tranſient advantages to the laſting ſatisfaction of not finding, in the bottom of my heart, any juſt matter of reproach.

Farewell,

Farewell, my amiable, my dear Hortenſia; ceaſe to occupy your thoughts about a friend whom you will make happy. Oh! *I do not deſire to be forgotten by you*; but I deſire never to excite any melancholy reflections in your mind, and never to diſturb the pleaſures which love and fortune are preparing for you. May you experience every delight of a well-ordered union; and, to efface from my heart the uneaſineſs which your letter gives me; tell me, repeat to me; *I am contented*; *I am happy*; *nothing is wanting to complete my felicity*.

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END of the FIRST VOLUME.

ERRATA.

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Page	47.	line	8. *for* maid, *read* maids
	95.		24. *dele* me
	105.		5. *for* ſhall, *read* will
	105.		7. *for* ſhall, *read* for
	111.		16. *for* will be, *read* is
	115.		17. *for* is apt, *read* are apt
	230.		1. *for* Ten, *read* Two
	231.		4. *for* lover, *read* love

ERRATA.

VOL. II.

Page	5.	line	5. *for* theſe, *read* thoſe
	5.		12. *for* unfortunate, *read* unhappy
	71.		15. *for* gnorant, *read* ignorant
	76.	laſt	line *dele* to
	87.		4. *for* in, *read* with
	113.		12. *for* reverend, *read* revered
	191.		24. *dele* and
	230.		4. *for* by own, *read* by my own